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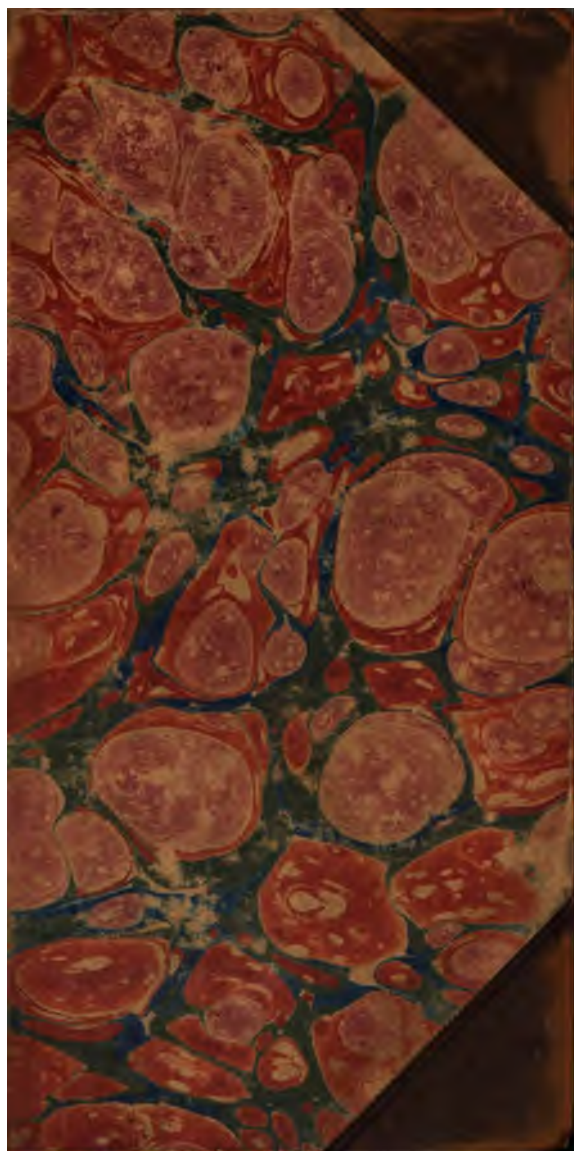
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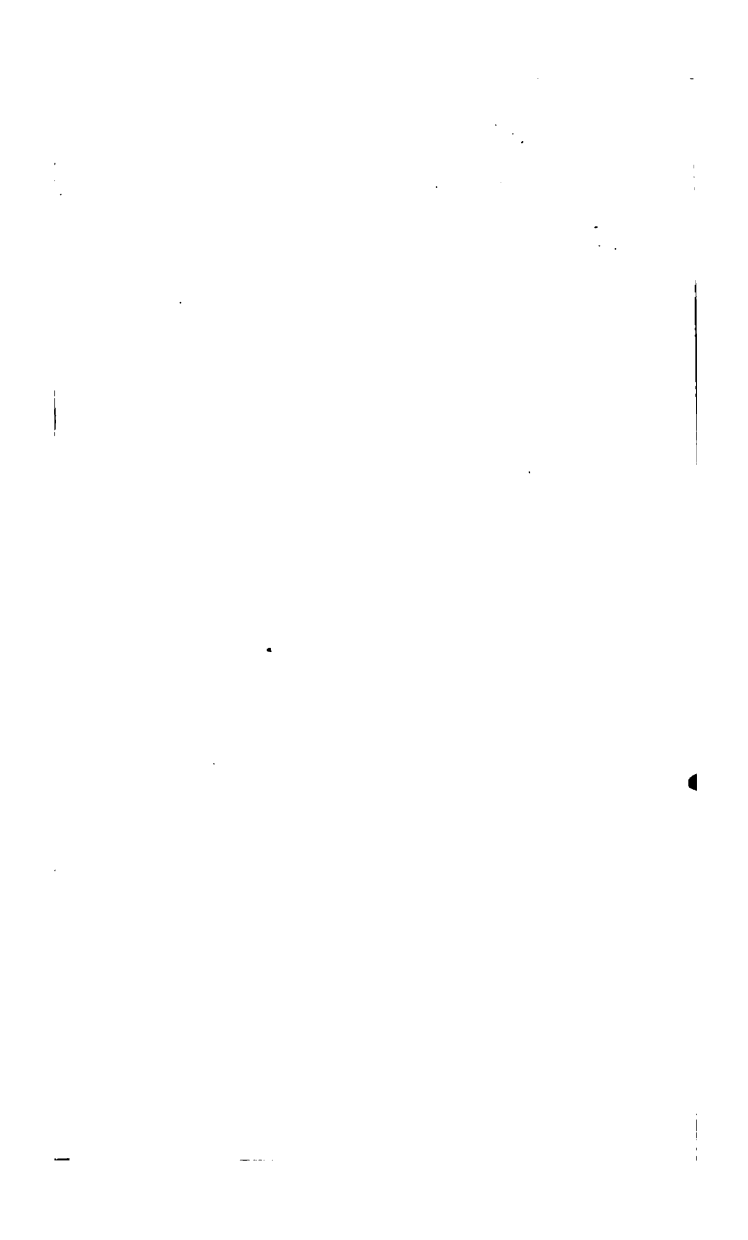




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REASONS

7th. 1821

FOR DEPARTING FROM

POPERY.

BY JOHN MONAGHAN,

SCRIPTURE READER

To the Reformation Society at Bradford, Yorkshire.

Let no man deceive you with vain words. *Eph. v. 6.*

To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not
according to this word, it is because there is no
light in them. *Isa. viii, 20.*

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subject, by eminent men, on various occasions ; it may be answered, that, notwithstanding the numerous and excellent discourses delivered from the pulpit, and issued from the press, both in ancient and modern times, for the purpose of stemming the torrent of antichristian error, yet it is lamentable to relate, that, towards the meridian splendour of gospel-day, many are the infatuated dupes of popish superstition, whose spiritual interests and happy privileges point them to a better choice. But let it be observed, that the humble author of this work makes no pretences to excel other writers on this subject, nor hopes to be more successful than they ; but because he was conversant with the dogmas of popery, and experienced the feelings, motives, and desires of its rigid and numerous votaries until he was nearly nineteen years of age, when, by the instrumentality of the Bible, and the influence of the Spirit of God, he was *emancipated* from its benighted thralldom, and “*shewn a more excellent way,*” and was the subject of much ridicule, domestic bereavements, persecution, and exile ; he therefore deems it right to offer to the public a few remarks relative to the errors of the papal creed, which will amply justify his nonconformity to it, and counteract and silence the different false opinions of many respecting him at his first setting out.

Some said, that a "secular motive was the stimulus to such heresy," as they called it; but the persecution and painful privations he has undergone, have long since put that assertion to silence. Others declared that "he was under a delusion by the power of Satanic influence, and in a very little time would either become the visible object of God's displeasure, or his new opinions would evaporate like smoke, or dwindle into nothing like the mushrooms of a day," and he would again return with shame on his head. In this also, "the accuser of the brethren is proved to be the father of lies;" and instead of being in a delusion that would soon evaporate, the lapse of more than nine years has only strengthened his impressions; being fully persuaded that his religious sentiments will be found to be orthodox in the great day of final retribution, and expecting the accomplishment of that hope which maketh not ashamed.

Should this work come into the hands of any Roman Catholic who may favour it with his attention, it is requested that he lay aside all prejudice, and exercise his own reason, that he may be able to discriminate between truth and error, as the author has done, who was once as zealous as any can be in the cause of Popery. And be it known unto all, that his renunciation of the errors of the Romish Church was not rash and

precipitate, but the subject of mature deliberation and diligent enquiry for nearly two years; so that the few observations here presented are only a mere epitome of his former labours in the search of truth.

Should his name be cast out as evil for attempting to do good by exposing error, he rejoices at being counted worthy the honour of such reproach; and if these few imperfect remarks should in the least degree bring glory to God and good to mankind, they will answer the sincere desire and fervent prayer of

THE AUTHOR,

JOHN MONAGHAN.

REASONS

FOR

DEPARTING FROM POPERY.

OBLIGATION and responsibility are the principal incentives to religious worship, and the bonds of social intercourse in worldly economy. We are under obligations of gratitude to God for all the blessings we enjoy, and accountable to him for the use we make of them ; but the claims which human beings have on each other, however closely connected, are very narrowly limited, as they extend no farther than the common affairs of this life. When we have discharged the duties peculiar to our secular calling, we have done with man ; and to God only are we accountable for the things which relate to eternity.

From a deep conviction of the truths here asserted, I stand against the fury of Popish opposition, supported by the word of God and the testimony of a good conscience, and exclaim, with St. Peter and the other Apostles, " We ought to obey God, rather than men." Acts. v, 29. For although

the laws of God and nature command us to obey our parents, submit to our superiors, and live in charity with all men ; yet, when their demands, however urgent, run counter to the will of God and our eternal interests, the mandate of Heaven forbids us to obey them, on penalty of incurring the divine displeasure, and completing the ruin of our own souls. Our Lord says—"he that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me : and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me." Matt. x, 37. But some pay no regard to this rule, for, without understanding or consideration, they thunder out volleys of oaths and curses against any of their persuasion who will attempt to deviate from the religion (as they call it) of their fore-fathers, however low they may be sunk in the depths of superstition ; as if our souls were not our own, or as if our friends could account for us at the bar of God.

How uncharitable and unreasonable then must it be, for any one to persecute another for endeavouring to serve God according to the dictates of his conscience, when he must answer for himself at the judgment-seat of Christ ! Can any thing be more improbable, than to expect that a person in the exercise of reason, and enlightened by divine truth, should be prevented by a feeble arm of flesh, from the enjoyment of Heaven's blessings, which are freedom of will and grace, and the happy privilege of our auspicious government—liberty of conscience ? For although, at certain periods, cruel measures have been resorted to, in order to impede the religious progress of certain indi-

viduals, and render them subservient to the power of their adversaries, and although their bodies have been bound with chains in prisons, and by fire and faggots reduced to ashes; yet who could restrain the limits of their immortal desires, or withhold from them the cheering consolations of God, who promised "never to leave nor forsake them?" Therefore, as God is the strength of his people, let all those who are of a persecuting spirit stay their hands, and establish their doctrine, if they can, by the strength of good example and power of argument, and not by compulsion.

The few observations here presented, are intended to shew that "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strong holds, casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God." 2 Cor. x, 4-5. As justice and truth are due to all, it is but reasonable to say, that altho' the Church of Rome has gone astray and has wandered into the devious wilds of darkness and superstition, yet she acknowledges the doctrines of the Holy Trinity, the incarnation of the Eternal Word, the necessity of good works, the resurrection, and eternal rewards and punishments. It is to be regretted that farther concessions cannot be made, but that we must hence-forward behold a tissue of error, causing us to startle and recoil into the bosom of self-preservation, like a man bound to some distant land in a vessel of favourable appearance, but which on a more strict examination is found to be full of leaks and rottenness, from which he flies with speed, to make choice of a

better. And who, in the exercise of common sense, could censure a man that, in a much more important concern, retracts his former engagements on the discovery of danger unseen before? the laws of nature and the voice of Heaven crying aloud to him, "Escape for thy life!" Gen. xix, 17. And such is the discovery which one must make before he can escape from the Church of Rome; for this holy mother esteems herself so highly, that almost the first thing she teaches her children, is, that all others are heretics but themselves. This and a few other superstitious maxims are the principal part of their religious instruction, for which they think too highly of themselves, and despise others. They must, therefore, receive an honest view of themselves in this case, before any of them can become reputed heretics by the declaration of their holy but offended mother. Such was the case with the writer of these lines, who for nearly nineteen years was as rigid a devotee as ever bowed to the shrine of Popery, and for a considerable time took an active part in the service of the altar as clerk, and strictly attended to all the rites and ordinances of the Popish Ritual. But as a detail of the circumstances which led to his conversion from the errors of Popery would occupy more space than the limits of this work will allow, and as this may be expected at some future period, let it suffice the reader to know, that the Bible was the principal instrument, together with a tedious controversy with an indefatigable protestant antagonist for nearly two years, during which time the writer had recourse to every thing that he

thought might afford some strength to his cause. But as bad paint has a greater tendency to be-dawb than to adorn; so, the more argument he used, the worse his cause was made to appear, as it brought every thing to the touch-stone of truth, where every existing deformity was exhibited. He then saw the Bible was the word and will of God, and was determined to give it an impartial reading, making it a matter of conscience to embrace the truth wherever it was found to exist; and in order to be undeceived, he procured, by privacy, the Douay Testament, the authorized version of the Popish Church; for although it is called the authorized version, yet the laity are prohibited to read it. Here he met with a great disappointment, for, instead of finding what would strengthen his old arguments, he met with many things to contradict them; and he even found that the catechism called the Christian Doctrine, which he took so much pains to learn in his youth, completely contradicted itself, as may be seen in part of this work. Thus were the hidden mysteries of darkness brought to light by the reading of the Gospel: then every thing appeared in its proper colours; prejudices were removed, and salvation was the only object in pursuit. As long as the smallest hope of salvation could be entertained in the Popish Church, he could not think of leaving it; but when every thing was examined, as the reader will see in the following pages, all expected hardships and privations were submitted to, in confidence of the fulfilment of that promise of our Lord,—“Every one that hath forsaken houses, ~

brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundred fold, and shall inherit everlasting life." Matt. xix, 29. But this promise was soon put to the test; for no sooner was the Gospel embraced, than the storm of persecution beat hard, and a compliance with former errors, or an open grave, threatened a further progress in the ways of truth. A silent retreat was preferred to either; and the writer may say to the Bible, as the martyr did when he held it up in the flames, "It was thou that broughtest me hither!"

And now he proceeds to shew his reader the different and particular grounds for his leaving the Church of Rome, founding them on reason and Scripture, making Jesus Christ the sole basis of his superstructure; knowing that, "other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." 1 Cor. iii, 11. For although Papiets acknowledge him to be the Son of God who died to redeem us, and allow him to be sufficient, yet they have many redeemers beside him; which will appear both dangerous and ineffectual, from the following considerations.

That man has fallen from that state of primeval rectitude and spotless innocence in which he was placed by the hand of his beneficent Creator, and has sunk into the lowest depths of degradation and moral depravity, are facts which are too evident to be denied. Thus the whole human race, without exception, are by nature the degenerate posterity of Adam; corrupt branches of the same corrupt stock, "far from God and righteousness, possessing

the carnal mind which is enmity against God." Rom. viii, 7. And in this forlorn condition man must have inevitably perished, had not God himself devised a plan whereby to restore his apostate creature to his forfeited bliss; for man having transgressed against an infinite Being, he, as a finite creature, could render no satisfaction for his offence. "Present for past" could "ne'er atone." "Rivers of oil and seas of blood must all have flowed in vain;" they could only be a finite oblation, which never could answer an infinite demand. Angels could not have redeemed man: they are only finite and created beings, and consequently could not offer an infinite satisfaction. Thus all human and angelic merit shrunk into nothing, when the inflexible justice of an offended God cried out against the trembling culprits, saying, "Pay me that thou owest." Here the wretched transgressors must have stood speechless, being unable to answer the demands of justice, or avert the stroke of punishment, had not the heavenly voice of *redeeming love* sweetly interposed. This is beautifully described by our great Poet, when shewing the miserable and helpless condition of man, the claims of infinite justice against him, and God's address to the host of Heaven relative to his recovery.

"man,
 "To expiate his treason, hath nought left,
 "But, to destruction sacred and devote,
 "He with his whole posterity must die.
 "Die he or justice must; unless for him
 "Some other able, and as willing, pay
 "The rigid satisfaction,—death for death.

"Say, heav'nly powers! where shall we find such love?
 "Which of ye will be mortal to redeem
 "Man's mortal crime, and just th' unjust to save?
 "He ask'd, but all the heav'nly choir stood mute,
 "And silence was in heav'n." MILTON. Book 3.

Silence might well prevail at such a weighty proposal; for any one of the highest order of angelic beings must shudder at the idea of becoming a substitute for man, to bear the stroke of offended justice. But the second person of the ever-blessed Trinity stepped forward, and offered himself to die for man, saying,—

"Father, thy word is past; man shall find grace;
 "Behold me then; me, for him, life for life,
 "I offer; on me let thine anger fall."

Then might God the Father say in behalf of man,—“Deliver him from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom.” Job xxxiii, 24. And then might angels sound a louder strain than when chaos sprang into all the beauties and sublimities of creation at the word of Jehovah; for though

"’Twas great to speak a world from nought,
 "’Twas greater to redeem."

Thus, after the act of man's redemption had passed in heaven, it might be said that God again visited his abject creatures, and proclaimed their deliverance; and although shame and fear had caused them to hide themselves amongst the trees of the garden, it was then that the dawn of mercy glimmered in the first Gospel promise, (Gen. iii, 15,) which was fulfilled in the fulness of time; for “God sent his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the

flesh." Rom. viii, 3. For he died in our stead, "the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." 1 Pet. iii, 18. "Having been made sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." 2 Cor. v, 21. "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." 1 John. ii, 2. iv; 10. And he was fully qualified for this, being God with God and man with men; "for in him dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Col. ii, 9. In whose glorious person all the attributes of Deity sweetly harmonize; for on the day that he suffered and died for man, the highest demands of justice were fully satisfied, whilst mercy was displayed in saving the transgressor: here, "mercy and truth met together; righteousness and peace kissed each other." Psal. lxxxv, 10. And when the Poet viewed the perfections of God delightfully harmonizing in the economy of man's redemption, he exclaimed,—

"Here the whole Deity is known,
 "Nor dares a creature guess,
 "Which of the glories brightest shone;
 "The justice or the grace."

Here we may stand astonished at the wisdom of God in the great mystery of godliness, "God manifested in the flesh." 1 Tim. iii, 16. "For without shedding of blood there could be no remission." Heb. ix, 22. Therefore, if Jesus Christ had been only God, he could not have suffered death; or only man, he could not have conquered death, nor effected our redemption; for God had

been too terrible for our guilt, and man too frail for our relief; but God and man united in the person of Jesus Christ neither affrights us by his majesty, nor discourages us by his frailty. For being God and man in one person, in order to unite God and man in one covenant, and to make peace between the offended Creator and his offending creatures, he died "the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." And being perfect man, he could die; and perfect God, he could arise and not be holden by death; for he burst the barriers of the tomb, "ascended on high, led captivity captive; received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also." Psal. lxxviii, 18. And there "he ever liveth to make intercession for us, and is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him." Heb. vii, 25. Thus it is evident, from reason and scripture, that we are not indebted to angels or men for our salvation, but to Jesus Christ only, who ratifies this assertion by saying,—“Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.” Isa. xlv, 22.

The drift of this argument is merely to prove that there is salvation in none other (but Christ,) for, “there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” Acts iv, 12. “He is the atonement for our sins.” 1 John ii, 2. Our “Advocate with the Father.” 1 John ii, 1. “The head of his Church.” Eph. v, 27. And “The light of the world.” John viii, 12. This is the true doctrine of Christ, and the subject of the Apostles’ ministry; of which

St. Paul speaks when writing to the Galatians. "There be some that trouble you, and would prevent the Gospel of Christ; but though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." Gal. i, 7—8. But amongst the various denominations of professing christians, none appear to have subjected themselves more to this censure than the pastors of the Church of Rome; for notwithstanding their pretended sanctity, and lofty claims to evangelical pre-eminence, as being the successors of the Apostles, and the only true ministers of Jesus Christ; yet they exclude him from his offices, and introduce in his stead, penance, alms-deeds, and masses, for our atonement; saints and angels for our advocates; the Pope for our head; and tradition and the commandments of men for our rule and guide! This is too evident to be denied, and too dangerous to be received. *And in order to prevent the denial of this statement, it is necessary to commence with a description of penance in their own words.*

Penance, they say, is a sacrament instituted by our Lord Jesus for the remission of sins committed after baptism; its matter is the sins of the penitent accompanied with contrition, confession to a priest, and satisfaction to God, by a faithful performance of the penance enjoined by the priest to whom we confess; the effects are, remission of sins, reconciliation to God, a restoration and increase of grace. Penance, then, is our only refuge; the only plank to save us after we have made

shipwreck of our conscience by sin.* But in order to inform the reader more fully of the nature of penance, I shall further describe it according to my own repeated experience, in the following manner. Private and auricular confession is made to a priest, in which the person is commanded, under the penalty of a most awful punishment, to confess all the sins which he has committed either by thought, word, or deed, as far as he can remember, since his last confession. Then, after reproof and advice by the priest, he receives the sum of his penance, which generally consists in the repetition of a number of prayers for a certain time; not always, or every-where, as the Apostle would have it, (1 Tim. ii, 8,) but according to the nature and magnitude of his crimes; to which may be added a few Fridays' fasts, or a few stations performed at Baal,† the Rick,‡ Lough-dharg,|| or some other place of superstitious antiquity appointed for that purpose. Then the venerable father raises his hand and puts it on the head of the penitent, and pronounces the words of absolu-

* See Mannock's Christian Doctrine explained, pages 146—7 and 8.

N. B. Although this book is here and elsewhere called in this work by the name of Christian Doctrine, because it is not known by any other; yet it is a wrong title, as many parts of it are Antichristian.

† Baal,—an old building and a well in the West of Ireland.

‡ The Rick,—the top of a lofty mountain in the county of Mayo, in form of a rick.

|| Lough-dharg or Derg, an island in the North of Ireland. The most gross superstitions are practised at these places.

tion; after which, the sacrament of the Lord's supper is partially administered to him; (in one kind only, the wine being withheld from the laity;) and he then departs from God's supposed vicergerent with the hope of his sins being pardoned! Now, in the name of reason and common sense, where is Christ here? Nay, he is allowed neither part nor lot in the matter; and however this irrefragable statement of facts may be sneered at and denied by the votaries of Rome, who generally deny the truth when they have no other refuge; yet I am a living witness of what is here asserted, for I remember once having made confession to a priest, after which he said, "Remember I have given you absolution." But alas! I found no inward change, no divine operation, or spiritual influence on my mind. Oh! how unlike is this to the religion of the Gospel! which is perfect love casting out fear. 1 John iv, 18. Faith working by love, purifying the heart. Acts xv, 9. And justifying the ungodly. Rom. v, 1. "He who believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself." 1 John v, 10.

Now this doctrine of penance is as false as it is absurd, having no scriptural foundation. For although the word REPENTANCE is rendered *penance* in the English Version of the Douay Testament, from the Vulgate; yet it is evident that where our Lord makes mention of the word REPENTANCE in any part of the New Testament, he means directly what he says, otherwise he could not have extended mercy to the penitent thief on the cross, who then had no time nor place to do penance.

Thus, according to the Popish Version, which is,—*Except ye do penance ye shall all perish*,—our Lord must either have contradicted himself, which could not be, or the penitent thief must have been lost; unless it can be made to appear, that he was doing penance when he was suffering and dying. To this it may be answered, his sufferings and death were the penalty of the laws of his country, and that he suffered justly according to his own words: “We receive the due reward of our deeds, but this man (meaning our Lord) hath done nothing amiss.” Luke xxiii, 41. It was not on account of the thief’s sufferings that Christ forgave him his sins; for on this ground he would have forgiven the other also, as they both suffered alike; but because he repented with a godly sorrow, and believed in the ability and willingness of Jesus Christ to save him. But it is common with persons who hold opinions contrary to truth, when every other argument fails them, to flee to the omnipotence of God, by asking, “Is any thing too hard for him?” But if men espouse false opinions, and consequently are unable to defend them, God is not bound to work miracles to please their misguided fancy; neither can he do any thing inconsistent with his own dignity or perfections, because, “it is impossible for God to lie.” Heb. vi, 18. Some ingenious forger may indeed say that the thief’s penance was completed in purgatory. But how could that be, when he never went to such a place? as is evident from the words of Christ, who said to him on the day that he suffered,—“To-day shalt thou be with me

in Paradise." Luke xxiii, 43. Meaning that very day; unless paradise be purgatory,—to suppose which is impossible. If paradise were purgatory, when Adam was created he was placed in purgatory! and if it is such a place for purging and burning sins away, is it not strange that God should put him there before he had committed any sin? Such are the absurdities to which the papistical doctrine of penance leads! Penance, then, is no sacrament instituted by Christ for the remission of sins committed after baptism, but a mere fabrication of modern priestcraft. For when the Apostle said,—“If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live;” (Rom. viii, 13;) he did not mean that we were to run into wild extremes by lying upon beds of spikes like Indian fakeers, or cutting ourselves with lancets like the priests of Baal, or by walking upon our bare knees on sand or pebbles, like some devotees of the Romish Church, who suppose that by these acts of mortification and penance they not only atone for all their past sins, but excel others so much in piety, that they bring God almost into debt to them by their extraordinary and super-abundant acts of cruelty against themselves in the performance of penance. But the Apostle meant nothing like this; for he says, it is by *the Spirit* we are to mortify the deeds of the body: i. e., not in our own strength, but, by the power and influence of the Spirit of God, to mortify the deeds of the carnal mind,—every evil propensity and ungodly disposition being destroyed, and the mind conformed to

the will of God; by possessing that mind which was also in Christ Jesus.

Of Alms-deeds.

ANOTHER part of the Atonement here mentioned, is that of alms-giving, or what is sometimes called charity. This generous act of christian benevolence is incumbent on all men, according to their abilities; and if it were only a cup of cold water, it shall in no-wise lose its reward, if it be performed as an act of christian duty: but to expect the most laudable action to atone for sin, or expiate guilt, is an insult to the God of heaven; for however strictly we may attend to the commandments of God, we cannot exceed our duty. How easy it is for even well-disposed persons to err here, by not knowing the scriptures or the power of God, and by placing faith in a wrong object! For, however strong and powerful a man's faith may be, yet if, for want of being rightly informed, he selects an improper object, it will prove as ineffectual to his salvation as if he had no faith at all. For instance, God is the proper object of our worship and services,—faith and good works the sum of our duty: but if we make the merit of our works the object of our faith, instead of making our faith perfect by our works, (Jas. ii, 22.,) we rob God of his honour by making works our Saviour, and lose salvation by depending on the merits of christian duty, and not on the atonement of Jesus Christ. None have any thing to spare, seeing that "all have sinned and come short

of the glory of God." Rom. iii, 23. Therefore, the performance of one good work cannot atone for the neglect of another. Where then is boasting? for our Lord says,—“When ye shall have done all these things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which was our duty to do.” Luke xvii, 10.

Of the sacrifice of the Mass, its nature and origin.

BUT this vain and superficial atonement, which is substituted for the merits of Christ by the Romish Church, does not terminate in *penance and alms-deeds*: for to them is added the mysterious novelty of the sacrifice of the Mass; which, like Melchisedec, is without father or mother, or any descent; for we cannot find a passage in all the sacred writings either to reveal its ancestry or confirm its authority! From whence then cometh this stranger of the earth, who was never known by prophets or apostles, but appears to have been reserved to distinguish the favourites of heaven in these latter days?

As the sacred pages give us no account of this strange sacrifice, except by disapproving of the improper garb in which it is wrapped up, namely, “an unknown tongue,” (1 Cor. 14,) we must, in order to discover it properly, consult the volume of nature, where we find its origin described in the pages of agriculture by the husbandman. There we find the fruit of the farmer’s sheaf, and the juice of the vintager’s grape, made into bread and

wine, and afterwards believed to be changed into the real body and blood, soul and divinity, of our Lord Jesus Christ, by virtue of the words of consecration, as really and substantially as he was born of the virgin, died on the cross, and is reigning at his Father's right hand in heaven! In this belief he is offered in the Mass for the sins of the people, and afterwards eaten by the priest! Some of this kind of bread, but no wine, is given to the communicants, under the idea of being the God who created and redeemed them! And in order to confirm this, when the priest administers it to the people, he says, "*Ecce Agnus Dei qui tollit peccatum mundi;*"* and then tells them that it is the real and substantial body and blood, soul and divinity, of Jesus Christ! Here are ignorance, idolatry, and the most infatuated delusion, as palpable as are represented by the Prophet in the xlv. chap. of Isaiah, respecting a man cutting down a tree, making a fire of one part of it to warm himself and cook his victuals, and of the other part making a god and falling down to worship it. For we find the priest and his people worship a god of bread and wine made of the same materials as those which so often constitute part of their richest banquets; and they are not content with worshipping him only, but also eat him! And this god they tell us is perfect and indivisible, and yet he is offered and eaten in hundreds of places at one and the same time! But if this be the real Christ who is offered so

* Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world.

often, the priests who offer him differ very much from the declaration of St. Paul, who speaks of Christ having been once offered to bear the sins of many, and shews that he would not imitate the high-priest, whose offering prefigured him; for, says he, "Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are *the figures of the true*; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: nor yet *that he should offer himself often*, as the high-priest entereth into the holy place every year with the blood of others; for then must he *often have suffered* since the foundation of the world; but NOW ONCE, in the end of the world, hath he appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." Heb. ix, 24, 25, 26.

But the Romish priests, it appears, are not content with this one offering; for they pretend to make a God of bread and wine, and offer and eat him as often as they please! the nature of which they call the sacrament of transubstantiation, and tell us that it was instituted by Christ himself, which they attempt to prove from the vi. chap. of the Gospel by St. John, where they take our Lord's meaning of the following words to be according to their literal sense: "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." Now, if we are to understand the words of Christ here literally, we must think that at his last supper, when this sacrament was instituted, he ate himself, and at the same time gave himself to be eaten by his disciples; for they all partook of the same bread

and wine together. And if this is the manner in which we are to understand Christ when he speaks to us in figurative language, then we must believe that Herod was a real fox, and lived in a den in the earth; Christ a door made of boards, and at the same time a highway made of stones and gravel; also, a solid rock, a vine, and all his disciples branches growing out of him; and his Father a real man dressing this vine. To understand all or any part of this literally, would be worse than idiotism, and an abomination. And yet it is as reasonable as the doctrine of transubstantiation. The bread and wine which our Lord blessed and shared with his disciples, were not flesh and blood, but the figures or representations of them; for Christ had not then suffered: therefore they could not have been his flesh and blood, but bread and wine, according to his own words; for although he called the bread his body figuratively, and the wine his blood, or representation of it; yet, after they had received both, he said to his disciples,—“I will not drink henceforth of *this fruit of the vine*, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.” Matt. xxvi, 29.

But the passage,—“Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you,”—is figurative language, and the meaning is this: as our natural food is the support of our bodies, so Christ must be the spiritual life of our souls; otherwise we can have no life in us. As our souls must have died eternally without the virtue of Christ's atonement; so, by sincere

repentance, and a lively faith in God, through the merits of his sufferings and death, we have spiritual life through him, these blessings having been purchased for us by the breaking of his body and spilling of his blood on the cross, of which the bread and wine were only figures. He is the bread or supporting means of eternal life, that came not up out of the earth, "but down from heaven." Hence it is evident that our Lord's meaning is spiritual and not literal, as appears also from his reply to his disciples who murmured at his discourse, and said, it was a hard saying, who could bear it? He answered them,—“It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life.” John vi, 60—63. The words which he then spoke related to man's redemption and salvation, by the sacrifice of himself; and in the commemoration of which we are to receive the pledges of his love in the holy sacrament, as he has said, “Do this in remembrance of me.” Luke xxii, 19. And St. Paul says, “As often as ye eat this bread,” (not flesh,) “and drink this cup,” (not blood,) “ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.” 1 Cor. xi, 26.

From these remarks, so strongly confirmed by our Lord's own words, it is palpable that the doctrine of transubstantiation is both irrational and antisciptural. Oh! was ever God more dishonoured, and man more degraded, even by the most rigid cast of Indians, than by those who believe the doctrine of transubstantiation! and yet a man under the light of revelation must be deemed

a heretic, and persecuted as a traitor, for leaving so dangerous a doctrine. May God hasten the happy era, when pagan and papal darkness shall hide its gloomy face beneath the refulgent glory of Gospel light!

Of the improper and evil use of an unknown tongue in the public worship of God.

ANOTHER evil attending the Mass, is the mysterious language, to many, in which it is celebrated; for there are select portions of scripture read in the course of the service, generally taken from the Gospels, Epistles, and the Psalms; and these, which are all the good that attends it, are kept from the principal part of the congregation. Now, as in this part of the world Latin is not generally understood, very few can receive any instruction from a Latin Mass; therefore, the priests may be said to give no instruction in this service, but rather—

“Sullen like lamps in sepulchres they shine, and
“Enlighten but themselves.” BLAIR.

Whilst the poor deluded people, content to be kept in the dark, think there is a virtue in the sacrifice and holy water from which they receive much benefit. But where can the priest find authority to justify such conduct as this? If there is any thing in the Mass which he does not wish people to know, why should they be censured for not attending it? If it is for their instruction, why not express it in a language in which it can be generally understood? The general answer to

this question is,—“Were Mass to be celebrated in a language commonly understood, in course of time a common cow-boy would learn to say it!” But this is a poor apology; for if the Mass is good, so much the better if all knew it; and if it is otherwise, the world would be better without it. But if we ask St. Paul, he will soon decide the dispute in this matter; for he says, in the 14th chapter of his First Epistle to the Corinthians, that “he that speaketh in an unknown tongue, speaketh not unto men, but unto God, for no man understandeth him. Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophecy, or by doctrine? And even things without life-giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped? For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle? So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air.” Here the Apostle condemns this mode of worship, and shews the speaker and hearers of such to be barbarians; for, says he, “There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification. Therefore, if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me.” He also tells us of the discord and confusion of such proceedings, saying,—“I

will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also. Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?" Hence those who call themselves the successors of the apostles, are condemned by him who was not a whit behind the greatest apostle; who, instead of giving sanction to this procedure of the Mass, proves it to be false and absurd. What now shall be done to support this tottering fabric, as reason and scripture have left it without a prop?

Although strange miracles and falsehood, which are the last refuge of its votaries, should be resorted to, they cannot support it, and down it must fall before the face of truth, like Dagon before the Ark. Where now is the Romanist's atonement for sin, since he has rejected Christ as a Saviour, although he will not acknowledge it, and the substitutes he has chosen in his stead are proved to be ineffectual?

But before this point is concluded, it may be observed, that whatever vain subterfuge the Romish Clergy may fly to, in order to vindicate their conduct in performing their public worship in an unknown tongue; it is obvious that their motive is to keep the laity from a knowledge of the scriptures, and this great evil also they endeavour to justify by saying "it is dangerous to permit the laity to read the scriptures, because of their liability to take a wrong meaning from them." But although they have attempted to prove that St. Peter speaks against the reading of them, there

is not a single passage in all the sacred writings that prohibits any from doing so, but many to the contrary. It is said in one part, "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy." Rev. i, 3. And again, we read that "all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." 2 Tim. iii, 16—17. Here is both the authority for reading the sacred volume, and the utility of doing so set forth; and it is not only our privilege to read God's word, but also our duty; for Christ commands us so to do, saying, "Search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me." John v, 39. Here is a command given to the world indiscriminately, by Christ himself; and how can feeble man presume to oppose him?

It is therefore evident that the laity are not prohibited by divine authority from reading the scriptures, but that they are, on the contrary, commended for their attention to them; for of the Jews at Berea, who attended to the preaching of Paul and Silas, it is said, "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and *sought the scriptures daily* whether these things were so." Acts xvii, 11. Here the reading of the scriptures by the laity, as the rule of faith and practice under private judgment, is commended by the apostles; which yet is condemned by the Church of Rome! St. Paul also commends the

practice of knowing the scriptures, even in childhood, a time when holy orders are out of the question; for he said to Timothy, "From a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus." 2 Tim. iii, 15.

And if we even had no divine authority for reading the sacred scriptures, general experience shews, that where one is lost by taking a wrong meaning from what he reads, wresting the scriptures to his own destruction, hundreds are lost for the want of reading them. And to prevent the laity from reading God's word, because some have abused it, would be like forbidding the use of wine, because some have abused themselves and it by intoxication; or like prohibiting the use of razors, because some have terminated their existence with them. If the general use of things were prohibited in order to prevent the abuse of them, we should soon be deprived not only of all the necessities of life, but even of life itself; for what is it that has not been abused, that has ever been within reach of fallen man? But although our Lord has given the scriptures to mankind in general, as the rule and guide of their lives; yet they are now monopolized by the Romish Clergy, who claim it as an ecclesiastical prerogative to dispense to the laity, as they please, this sacred treasure; for if any of their people dares to be so bold as to obey his Lord by reading the bible, and, in the interim, be struck with the awe of popish prohibition,—though eternal life were in the next page, he must shut the book; and a rigid

course of penance alone can wash out the stain of the great transgression. But some deny this when they are put to the test about it, and therefore add one evil to another.

I was both grieved and astonished at the late controversy at Bradford, to hear appeals and positive assertions made diametrically opposed to truth and matters of fact, by the Rev. Mr. Macdonald, Roman Catholic Priest, of Birmingham; whose proceedings, in opposition to indubitable facts, were, as I conceive, unbecoming the character of a gentleman and a professed minister of the gospel of Christ: for he stated that "they did not prevent their people from reading the scriptures, and appealed to such of them as were then present, if ever they knew themselves to be *the subjects of restriction* in such a case." I would have contradicted him on the spot, only for the sake of order, and expecting to be called upon before the conclusion of the meeting.

When I first began to read the scriptures, the parish priest where I then lived was informed of it, and he called me to an account about it; and when I had acknowledged it, he threatened me most severely with the strictest penitential punishment, saying, "Did you not know that the Church forbids the laity to read the scriptures, after having so often heard me declare it from the altar?" I answered, "Yes, sir, I have often heard you do so; but I thought there could be no harm in reading them." He then wanted me to make a promise to God and him, that I would never open the bible again. My reply was, "Sir, this I cannot do with safety; as

the bible may be lying shut on a desk or table, and if I should open it not knowing what book it might be, then my promise would be broken." "Well, but," said he, "would not you know it by the squares in it?" (I suppose the Rev. Gentleman meant the columns.) "But, sir," said I, "how could I see them until I should first open the book?" He was very much displeased with me for my disobedience; but hoped to reclaim me again, as he thought; for he warned me to come very soon to confession to him. I was much afraid of him, as I was then young and tender, and not altogether convinced of all the errors of the church to which I at that time belonged: yet I was more afraid of God, and the loss of my own soul, than of any thing else; and this, with divine aid, and repeated reading of the scriptures, endued me with fortitude to submit to all privations and persecutions, which were not a few.

I am ready and willing at any time to answer any enquiry that may be made, respecting the truth of what is here stated; and I think Mr. Macdonald can find no apology here by saying they don't do so in England, after advocating the existence of union in their church; for if such a union exists as he endeavoured to prove does exist, then we must think their church should be the same all over the world. If so, then he has either violated that union, by differing from the priests in Ireland, or spoken contrary to his own conscience, knowledge, and the established rules of his church of union, by denying the restrictions of the laity to read the scriptures.

If the Pope pretends to be wiser than our Lord, by endeavouring to disannul his commandment, in allowing none to read the sacred volume but the clergy, he ought not to be regarded, because it is the duty and privilege of all to read the scriptures, as appears from the words of truth, to which we have already referred. All cannot receive holy orders; therefore some must either disobey Christ or the Pope; because poverty is a prevalent difficulty amongst the lower classes of people, and is a barrier to education, the preliminary and essential qualification for ordination: therefore they may abide by their lot, for they shall never read the scriptures; and whether poverty or riches prevail, woe unto the female sex, for they are entirely excluded from all hopes of ever being ordained; therefore they must never open the bible, on pain of becoming heretics! But what does God say to his professed pastors in reference to this subject? "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me; seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God." Hos. iv, 6. But what an unspeakable blessing it is, that the Romish Clergy cannot keep the bible from all! for the Lord has raised a Wickliffe, a Luther, and many others, who, with christian zeal and undaunted fortitude, have plucked the sacred volume out of the jaws of the devouring dragon; and now the Moors and Hottentots are tasting its delicious fruit, and the children of Indians and Europeans are learning to lip the sacred name of Jesus, by its happy influence: and we trust soon

to see the arrival of that auspicious day, "when all flesh shall see the salvation of God."

The doctrine of creature worship considered.

As Jesus Christ is partially rejected, as the atonement for sin, and Saviour of mankind, by the members of the Church of Rome, they also reject him as their Advocate, and introduce in his stead saints and angels; and whatever they may say to the contrary; they pray ten times to the Virgin Mary, for once to God, in the prayer called the Pater and Avea, which they most commonly use; the conclusion of which is this: "Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for us sinners now and in the hour of our death,—Amen." Let none deny this, for thousands of times I repeated this prayer, and heard others do so too. And in the Litany of the Saints, which is inserted in the Manual, there is a long catalogue of the names of different saints, and the name of each of them is mentioned separately; at the conclusion of which is said,—"Pray for us."

Now, is any thing clearer than that these are made mediators instead of Christ? and yet the ingenious Pastors of the Church of Rome, (whose extraordinary faith, and superior power, enable them to imagine that they can change any thing into every thing or nothing,) meet with no difficulty in denying this, when the impropriety of it is questioned and found to be too shameful to admit of any defence, although their prayer-book exposes it to public investigation. Some of them endeavour to justify this practice, by saying, "We

don't worship the saints, we only pray to them to pray for us." But this apology makes the case no better, because it is putting them in the place of mediators, which is the office of Jesus Christ. For the apostle says, "There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus." 1 Tim. ii, 5.

But the practice of praying to the Virgin Mary, and the saints, is generally defended and justified in the following manner: "Suppose we had offended a certain individual, and from a motive of self-interest desired terms of reconciliation; if we could form an intimacy with the mother, or some other friend of the offended individual, to plead for us, we should entertain every hope of success; and ought we not to avail ourselves of such an advantage?" But, by the same rule of reason, we may argue, that if that individual had a son, who had already made reconciliation for us for what was past, and stood at the hall-door soliciting our approach, to partake of the choicest treasures which he had purchased for us, would it not be madness and folly of us, as well as the grossest insult to him, to disbelieve and disregard what he said, and sneak round to the kitchen, to beg of the servants to plead for us? This is just the case with those who pray to the Virgin Mary; for it dishonours Jesus Christ for them to discredit what he says, and trust more to his servants for what they need than to him, because they are no more than servants of Christ in their highest stations of dignity. Some say that we despise the Virgin Mary; but this is not true, for we allow that she ought of all nations

to be acknowledged blessed, but no object of divine worship or adoration: nor ought any other saint whatever. And the practice of worshipping saints or angels, is not only forbidden by Almighty God himself, but also by one of those angels who appeared to John the divine, in his sacred vision; when in his refulgent appearance he exhibited so much of the glorious splendour of the heavenly world, that the apostle fell down to pay him divine homage. The angel immediately forbade him, by saying,—“See thou do it not: I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God.” Rev. xix, 10.

Where then is the authority for worshipping saints and angels, when not only they forbid it, but also Christ himself, when Satan tempted Christ to idolatry of the basest kind, taking him up to an exceeding high mountain, and shewing him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, and said unto him,—“All these things will I give unto thee if thou wilt fall down and worship me?” Then Jesus said unto him,—“Get thee hence, Satan, for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.” Matt. iv, 8, 9, 10. Mark the expression! *him only*: this cuts off every vain apology for praying to saints and angels; for who dares contradict the words of Jesus Christ?

It appears that this great evil was practised, also, by some in the days of primitive christianity; for St. Paul warns the christians at Colosse against it, in the Epistle which he wrote to them from Rome, saying,—“Let no man beguile you of your reward

in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind." Col. ii, 18.

This is the true character of all angel worshippers; for if on any pretence people forsake Christ as their Advocate, and attach themselves to angels, to act in his place, they lose all the reward which he has purchased for them. To prevent this, the apostle warns the Colossians to let no man beguile or hinder them of their reward, in the virtue of Christ's atonement and advocacy. This is however done by many, of their own mere voluntary choice, having no scripture warrant for it; who thereby commit the sin of idolatry; and being too wise in their own eyes, to be taught by truth, but vainly puffed up by their fleshly minds, they rush forward into that gross evil against which God has manifested so much of his displeasure in all ages of the world. Angels are not proper objects of worship or divine homage, as they have no part in man's creation, redemption, or advocacy with the Father in behalf of mankind; for the greatest saint now in heaven, is as much indebted to redeeming love, as the greatest sinner upon earth who stands in need of mercy; and the highest order of angels cannot comprehend its mystery, for they have desired to look into it but in vain; therefore they have no part in the disposal of it, only to rejoice in its interest to returning sinners.

Christ proved to be the Rock on which his Church is built, and not St. Peter, or any other.

WHEN error is introduced amongst any denomination of people, and permitted by them to predominate over the better part, either by spiritual negligence, or from secular motives, it is like the commencement of a plague, that disseminates its poisonous contagion throughout every part that comes within reach of its influence; and no mortal can tell the ultimate limits of its baneful ravages and devastation. When the Church of Rome began to deviate from the written word of God, the only true standard of moral and religious conduct, and turned aside to Popery and human inventions, she opened the flood-gates of antichristian error, and deluged the christian world with idolatry and superstition.

But it is not intended here to irritate her advocates, who endeavour to establish the propriety of their sentiments by assertions without proof. But reason, history, and scripture, step forward to bear ample testimony to the facts here asserted; which are, that Popery is an infringement on the prerogative of Deity. For the Pope declares himself to be the head of the true church, having power to pardon sin, give or retain spiritual and divine favours, &c., all of which peculiarly belong to God, and not to men or angels. For although the Pope pretends to succeed St. Peter, in being

the head of the church, and the rock on which it is built, Jesus Christ says, that he himself is the Rock and Head, and not Peter or any other.

Thus in his discourse with his disciples at the coasts of Cesarea Philippi, he asked them, saying, "Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Matt. xvi, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18. Hence it is evident, that our Lord had no reference whatever to the person of Peter as the rock, but to himself, who was the subject of Peter's confession and declaration, that he was Christ, the Son of the living God: and upon this rock or doctrine expressed by Peter, that Christ is the Son of the living God, the church is built, and the gates of hell cannot prevail against it.

And Peter himself makes good this assertion; for, after his conversion, when he became a worthy champion for his Lord, being filled with the Holy Ghost, he disclaimed all right to supremacy, and gave all the glory to Christ, and preached him to the people as the only rock and chief corner-stone of the church which he had established; for when

Peter and the rest of the apostles were called in question at Jerusalem respecting the healing of the impotent man, Peter stepped forward boldly, and preached Christ, and not himself, saying,—“Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the *stone* which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the *head of the corner*: neither is there salvation in any other.” Acts iv, 10—12. And St. Paul corroborates this testimony when writing to the church at Ephesus, saying,—“Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ HIMSELF being the *chief corner stone*.” Eph. ii, 19, 20. Here St. Peter has only his part amongst the apostles and prophets in that foundation which is laid on Christ, “the chief corner-stone;” who has been head and foundation of his church in all ages of the world; of whom Moses spake, saying,—“He is the rock, his work is perfect; for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth, and without iniquity, just and right is he.” Deut. xxxii, 4. And St. Peter again says in reference to Christ being the rock,—“Wherefore also it is contained in the scriptures, Behold I lay in Sion a chief corner-stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.” 1 Pet. ii, 6, 7.

Now, from so many declarations contained in

both the Old and New Testaments, concerning Jesus Christ being the chief corner-stone and head of his church, it must appear to be antichristian as well as antiscriptural, to ascribe these offices to Peter or any other. Our Lord allowed no supremacy amongst the apostles; for when there was a strife amongst them which of them should be accounted the greatest, he said unto them, "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors; but ye shall not be so; but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he that is chief as he that doth serve." Matt. xxii, 24, 25, 26. And again, "Be not called Rabbi; for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren." Matt. xxiii, 8. Where is supremacy here? or where can the Pope find authority for St. Peter being prince of the apostles, and head of the church, and *he* his successor, after so many declarations of God's own word to the contrary? Therefore, let all those who believe and teach such opinions, "take heed unto themselves and to their doctrine," for this same Jesus, whom they reject as their foundation and head, shall be their Judge; and if error accompany them to the awful tribunal, St. Peter, whom they prefer as their head, cannot save them.

Connected with this subject, there yet remains one thing more to be considered; namely, what is to be understood by the keys given to Peter, and what was the extent of his commission in binding and loosing, remitting and retaining. Our Lord said to Peter, "I will give thee the keys of the

kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Matt. xvi, 19. And when the disciples were met together privately for fear of the Jews, Jesus came unto them, and he breathed on them, and said unto them,—“Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.” John xx, 22, 23. From these words, the pastors of the Church of Rome infer, “that the keys here mentioned which were given to Peter, were the keys of the kingdom of glory; and that he and all the apostles had power to pardon or retain sin, &c., and that the same power is handed down to them, as successors of the apostles, by hereditary inheritance.”

But this conclusion is an erroneous one, occasioned by interpreting the words literally, which our Lord used in a figurative sense, expressive of the apostles’ authority or divine commission to open the heavenly kingdom of grace, or the gospel dispensation, both to Jews and Gentiles. Acts ii, 41. And this is plainly manifested by the opening which this key made at Cesarea, in the house of Cornelius.

After Peter’s Jewish prejudices were removed by his vision, which taught him to communicate the glad tidings to all, he preached Jesus unto all who heard him, saying,—“To him gave all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth on him shall receive remission of sins. While Peter spake these words, the Holy Ghost

fell on all them that heard the word." Acts x, 43, 44. This word, by the influence of the Holy Spirit, was the key that opened the gospel salvation, or kingdom of grace, to them, and then opened their hearts to receive it, according to that prayer taught us by our Lord,—“Thy kingdom come;” which was fully answered in the opening of this kingdom of divine grace in the hearts of those who heard the word. It is thus we are to understand our Lord’s words to Peter respecting the keys of the kingdom of heaven; for this is a metaphor borrowed from a Jewish custom of making a doctor of the law; in whose hand was put the key of the closet in the temple, where the sacred books were kept, signifying his public authority to execute his office.* And such was the figurative meaning of the commission given not only to Peter, but also to all the rest of the apostles; for, before our Lord’s ascension, when they were all assembled together, he said unto them,—“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.” Mark xvi, 15. There they were all equally commanded to use this key, or great commission, to open the kingdom of grace to Jews and Gentiles, in order to lead them to the kingdom of glory. And the reason why this was first addressed to Peter, appears to have been because of his forward manner, and readiness to speak to our Lord above any of the rest of the apostles. This forwardness led him into many difficulties, and exposed him to many reproofs,

* See Dr. A. Clarke’s comment on this passage.

for which reason, in order to give him fresh encouragement, Christ often addressed him particularly, in matters which equally concerned the rest of the apostles as well as him.

Thus, in the use of the gospel key, or christian mission, they all had an equal part, as well as in the power of binding and unloosing, remitting and retaining sins. But this latter part of their mission had nothing to do with the pardon of sins. To suppose this, would be downright blasphemy and indignity against the Majesty of heaven; for who can forgive sins but God only, against whom they are committed?

But the extent of their authority in this case is as follows: the apostles having been so long in company with their divine Master, that they became familiar, in a certain sense, with the divine will, and imbibed the evangelical doctrine; and being inspired by the Holy Ghost, which he breathed upon them, and who was the powerful worker of all that was done by their instrumentality; they were well qualified for the very important office of opening a new dispensation; in which part of the Mosaic law was to be abolished, having been fulfilled, and part to be continued. They were therefore authorized to abolish or confirm, to bind or unloose, whatever was necessary, according to the dictates and guidance of the Holy Spirit, who directed them what to do; as he did to Peter, when the messengers from Cornelius sought him. "While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him,—Behold, three men seek thee." Acts x. 19. And as they had much

opposition to meet with, and many difficulties to encounter, they were encouraged and supported with the truth of the promise, that as God directed them by his Spirit what to bind and unloose, to remit and retain, he would also sanction their conduct, by ratifying in heaven what they performed on earth; and by the gift of spiritual discernment which they possessed, they had both authority and knowledge whom to admit into the church, and who to exclude from it, and had power to punish sin in a temporal way, by delivering to Satan, to diseases, plagues, and even death itself; as in the case of Ananias and Sapphira, by St. Peter; and Elymas, Hymeneus, and Philetus, by St. Paul.

Now, in all these cases, the extent of their commission was exercised in remitting and retaining, binding and loosing, in which nothing was done without the special influence and power of God, and not by human authority. Therefore it is the grossest insult to the God of heaven, to ascribe to any of his creatures the power or office of pardoning sin, or disposing of spiritual favours, which peculiarly belong to himself: for, "Vain is the help of man;" "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." James i, 17.

Having thus proved the non-existence of supremacy amongst the apostles, the impossibility of their power to pardon sin, and dispose of spiritual blessings; I come now to prove that the papal power has no hereditary or evangelical claim to

the office of St. Peter. For nothing can be more notoriously false than to assert that St. Peter was the first pope of Rome, and all other popes his successors, when the holy scriptures prove him to have no authority over the rest of his brethren; and we have no account whatever, either in scripture or authentic history, of his having ever been in Rome, or that he at any time, or in any place, ever sanctioned the Roman Catholic hierarchy. Such a thing did not exist in the days of the apostles, nor for hundreds of years after.

As this may appear strange to many who are unacquainted with the origin of Popery, it is necessary to direct the reader's attention back to the early ages of Christianity, when it had neither name nor being on the earth. For after the Gospel had been established by our Lord and his apostles, the great enemy of God and man exerted his malignant power in raising up different sects, whose principles and practices were opposed to truth. As these increased in number and strength, they persecuted the followers of Christ, and endeavoured to establish their own diabolical and heathenish systems. Nevertheless, the Christians increased in strength and number, and about the beginning of the fourth century they were delivered from the galling yoke of pagan tyranny and persecution by Constantine the Great, who took possession of the Roman empire, and afterwards embraced Christianity, about the year 314. He then evinced more zeal than knowledge in endeavouring to promote the interest of the christian religion. He issued an order that all the revenues

appropriated for the support of the heathen temples, should be bestowed on the christian clergy; and being no stranger to the tricks practised by the pagan priests, he ordered their idols to be exposed to the populace, that they might see in what manner they had been deceived by designing men; and this occasioned multitudes of people to embrace the christian religion, although it is probable that many of them did so without being properly instructed in its principles, and that they might acquire emoluments by complying with the orders of the Emperor.

Thus we find that in those days the form of true religion was not only profitable in a worldly point of view, but also fashionable, as more embraced it for a worldly motive than those who kept it for a heavenly one; and thus they continued until they were too strong for their enemies, and peace and tranquility rested amongst them in a political sense. They now began to compare their present peace with their former sufferings under pagan persecution, which brought to their remembrance the zeal, patience, and fortitude of their predecessors. These considerations raised in them a high esteem and veneration for the martyrs; but unhappily this was carried to excess, and produced some of the worst effects. Every thing that was circulated respecting these saints, was received without any examination, whether it might be true or false, and represented as meritorious in those who possessed it. Nay, even certain monks* made a trade of going from place

* Monk is the same as solitary, from the Decian per-

to place selling their bones and relics; and this practice was much encouraged by the most celebrated preachers of that age, such as Gregory Nazianzen, but particularly Crysostom, whose great eloquence was very conducive to the encouragement of superstitious practices; and some zealots pretended to have found the very cross on which our Saviour suffered; and many figures of it were hung up in the different churches. St. Crysostom said in a sermon which he preached one Good Friday, in the great church of Constantinople, that this wooden cross was "the foundation of the church, the safety of the world, the destruction of heathen temples, the overthrow of their altars, the scandal of the Jews, and the ruin of the ungodly." Here was an incentive to idolatry; for great would be the influence of such eloquence upon the minds of men, some of whom were only just brought over from paganism. Thus the substance of true religion was lost in the shadow; for the worship and veneration of the cross, the relics of saints and martyrs soon became the leading principles of their christianity. Such is the curse of leaving God in prosperity! When persecution raged against them, Christ was their portion, and the only object of their love; but now,

secession in the third century, from which many fled to the deserts for safety, where they dwelt in cottages and cells; and when peace was restored, they preferred their beloved retreats to a return to their native homes. The most noted of these were Paul and Anthony, two Egyptians, whom Jerome calls the fathers of the christian hermits.

in prosperity, they have forgotten him, and are turned to lying vanities.

But, until the fifth century the bishops of Rome made no effort to establish the papal power as universal; but many opportunities about that time were afforded, and then they began to gain ground, which was chiefly owing to the removal of the seat of the empire from Rome to Constantinople. The bishops of Rome then became intrusted with the care of both civil and ecclesiastical affairs, and it was common, in that age, for bishops in the neighbouring provinces to send to the bishop of Rome for his advice in difficult matters. This was at first an act of friendship, until length of time and custom reduced it at last to a matter of obligation, and the bishop of Rome was not content with the power which he had over his own people, but presumed to claim the right of it over the whole christian world; for, in the sixth century, a more powerful effort than ever was made by this haughty prelate, who was well acquainted with, as well as desirous of, the claims of his predecessors. This was submitted to by many with great readiness; nor do we need to wonder at this, when we consider the gross ignorance of the times; for the whole christian world, if it may be called so, was at that time a mere sink of iniquity; for heathen rites and ceremonies were artfully introduced, instead of pure religion.

It was at this time that the ceremonies of praying to and for the dead were fully established, and considered as an article of faith. This was at first a heathen custom, and by degrees crept in amongst

professing christians. The bishop of Rome gained universal authority over the church, not by peace or good-will, but by fraud and competition; for many opposed him and refused to submit to his authority. The bishop of Constantinople wrote to him, telling him that all the apostles were equal to each other in rank and dignity, so all bishops ought to be the same, and consider each other as brethren. Many others beside him refused to submit to the Pope; for, in the year 680, the council of Constantinople met to consult concerning the doctrine of the Trinity, and they spent much time in searching the ancient fathers: they excommunicated and anathematized the then Pope Honarius, which proves that the popes were not then considered infallible.

Such was the discord and wickedness which reigned, or rather raged, amongst them. But the pope still held his unlawful and arrogant ascendancy, and in the seventh century he obtained a triple crown; and in the eighth century so much did he prevail, that he got many orders and regulations established almost as they are at the present day. And thus the succession of popes was continued in Rome, though not without opposition, for there was pope against pope, who excommunicated each other.

In the beginning of the fifteenth century, the council of Constance was held, and the reason of its being called was to silence a tumult and schism which took place in the church by the election of three popes at one time, who all claimed to be right to infallibility; and each of them

thundered out their anathemas against the other. But at length one of these popes fled from the vengeance of the council, and the other two, who were competitors with him, viz., Gregory XII. and Benedict II., were deposed.

At this time many entertained good hopes that this council would reform many of the shameful abuses that had crept into the church; but in this they were all deceived; for, instead of making any amendment, they increased the cruelties and abominations which existed amongst them, and spent much time in condemning those whom they called heretics.* John Huss of Bohemia, and Jerome of Prague, were both condemned and executed by order of the council, and the proceedings and opinions of Dr. Wickliff were condemned many years after his death: and so great was their implacable hatred to him, that this council ordered his bones to be dug up out of the grave where they had been forty-four years deposited, and burned to ashes, and these ashes to be thrown into the brook which runs through the town of Lutterworth.

Such was the christian charity of that infallible church in those gloomy days! But when any great evil is carried to an extraordinary height, it must of necessity be arrested in its career; and such was the case with the papal power at this important crisis. For although they seemed to drive the world before them, and crush the few wandering followers of Christ wherever they could find them; yet, in the midst of apparent safety,

* Dr. Aikin's Biography, vol. 5. Art. Huss.

† Lewis's Life of Wickliff, page 136.

and at the full tide of flowing abominations, God made use of a simple instrument, in some measure, to stem the raging torrent of their wanton cruelty, reveal the hidden mysteries of darkness, and open a way for the refulgent rays of the Sun of Righteousness.

Martin Luther,* who was a native of Eisleben, in Saxony, where he was born in 1483, had received a learned education, was a man of mental vigour and sprightly genius, and had a mind naturally susceptible of serious impressions; and in his choice of the different avocations of mankind, he preferred the solitude of a monastic life, entered into a convent, and assumed the order of an Augustinian friar. There he arose to great popularity. By his close application to study, and assiduous attention to the love of knowledge, he had learned the scholastic philosophy and theology which was then practised by the ablest men of the day. But these were far from satisfying his enquiring mind, which thirsted for knowledge of a superior kind. To satisfy the desire of his pious feelings, he therefore dedicated himself to the reading of the sacred scriptures, having found a copy of the Bible which had long been neglected in the library of the monastery. He acquired such knowledge by it, that the monks were astonished, for they were not accustomed to get their theological instructions from that source.

Having thus risen to high esteem by his learning and piety, Frederick, Elector of Saxony, made

* Dr. Robertson's History of Charles V., vol. 2. page 109.

him first teacher of philosophy, and then of theology, in the university at Wittenberg; and here he flourished in good reputation, but was soon called to a more important undertaking, by means of the following circumstances.

Previous to this time, Pope Leo X. was raised to the papal throne, and finding that the revenues of the church were exhausted by the extravagant inventions of his two predecessors, Alexander VI., and Julius II. This prelate being naturally liberal and ambitious of a great name, he could not be confined to the limits of his property; he had a great taste for pleasure, and a generous mind in rewarding men of superior merit. These with many other things involved him in a long train of expences daily; and having tried every means that ingenuity could invent, to provide a fund equal to the demands of his extraordinary prodigality, the following diabolical measure was resorted to: viz., that of selling to the people, for money, indulgences* and pardons for crimes the most heinous. By this means vast sums of money were accumulated in Germany, and a part arising from the profits of the sale of them was allowed to Albert, Elector of Mentz, and Archbishop of Magdeburgh, who was the Pope's chief agent for retailing them in Saxony. Albert employed as his deputy one John Tetzel,† a Dominican friar of

* Indulgences were first invented by Pope Urban II, as a recompense to those who went to conquer the Holy Land.

† Dr. Robertson's History of Charles V., vol. 2. page 106.

licentious morals, but of an active spirit, and who had a gift of that eloquence which was capable of inflaming the passions of men whose ignorance and superstition allowed them to be the credulous dupes of glaring imposition. Tetzel being assisted by the Dominicans, used more zeal than discretion in the exercise of his commission; for although he made great progress at first, yet the gross irregularity of his conduct and that of his compeers soon came to light, for they were often seen to squander in drunkenness, gaming, and base debauchery, those sums which were given them for the purpose of obtaining eternal happiness.

Thus their evil was brought to light, and they and their employment became the objects of disgust both to pious and profane. For although mankind were sunk in the depths of moral depravity, yet God had a few witnesses even then, as he has had in all ages of the world.

But it is no cause of surprise in the view of rational beings, that these indulgences should be rendered odious in process of time, when their effects proved most pernicious to religion and laws, as they gave licence to unlimited crimes. For if any man purchased one of these indulgences, his soul might rest secure with regard to its salvation for ever, and he had no need ever to be anxious about it any more, and he should never have to suffer the pains of purgatory. The efficacy of the indulgence was so powerful, that the most heinous sins were pretended to be forgiven, and the person was not only to be free from all manner of punishment, but even of guilt itself.

Thus the general restrictions of criminality having been removed in the face of an ignorant and superstitious populace, it gave the reins to the degraded passions of Tetzels disciples; who violated laws both human and divine, to the dishonour of God, and the discord and ruin of human society. For honesty became a sacrifice to self-interest, and none who had indulgence could trust or be trusted. The master could not depend on the servant, nor the neighbours on each other; for when their crimes were pardoned before-hand, they had nothing to fear.

The princes and nobles were irritated at seeing their subjects cheated out of so much money in order to fill the treasury of a profuse pope. The few pious who were then to be found, were grieved and astonished at the triumph of Satan, and even some of the unthinking were shocked at the more than scandalous conduct of Tetzels and his concomitants. But although at this time priestcraft was carried to an enormous degree, yet it turned its own artillery upon itself, and defeated its own pursuits. For many who were before warmly attached to the principles of Popery, were induced to inquire into the fundamental truths of the system which was capable of giving sanction to the abuse of religion in the minds and morals of men. And when the whole was compared with the word of God, they were constrained by the force of truth, and the impulse of their feelings, to renounce the papal authority. And amongst these was the active and pious Martin Luther before-mentioned, who took a leading part in the important work of

rending the walls of Babylon, and exposing its abominations to the view of the world. For he declared from the pulpit, in the great church at Wittenberg, against the enormous evils of indulgences, examined the doctrines which they taught, and warned the people of the danger of depending on them for salvation, or any other means contrary to the word of God. This was gladly received by many, and the cause of truth began to revive in Germany under the sanction of Frederick Elector of Saxony; and this reformation broke out in different parts of Germany at the same time. And the cause of truth seemed to be the general inquiry; for Tetzel's wicked proceedings, and Luther's fame in opposing his fallacy, became a subject of general interest and research.

A similar concern took place in Switzerland, for the Franciscan friars were intrusted with the sale of indulgences in that part of the country, and their conduct was as odious as that of the Dominicans; but Zuinglius opposed them with intrepid zeal, and Luther got assistance from different quarters, so that, against all the thundering anathemas of Rome, and the united vigour of the Pope and his cardinals, the Sun of Righteousness beamed forth through the dense cloud of obscurity which had hid him from the world about eleven hundred years, except from a few persecuted people in these dark ages, who opened their hearts for the warming rays of his heavenly influence. Thus the woman returned from the wilderness, (Rev. xii, 6,) and the old religion revived, which was first established by Christ and his apostles.

Roman Catholics may tell us, that the religion of the reformation is only about three hundred years old; but this assertion, like their doctrine, is without foundation, and consequently must fall; for the reformed church is sanctioned by the approbation of heaven, and supported by the authority of God's own word. And however her members may be divided into different denominations of professing christians; yet, so long as they attend to the essential truths of christianity, though they may differ in minor points, they are all of one fold, under one Shepherd. And without respect to sect or party, all those who serve God and work righteousness, are accepted of him, and shall be acknowledged at the resurrection of the just.

Now, from this statement already given, we see as little of Peter in the papal power and succession, as we do of Christ in their doctrine; for although they acknowledge both by profession, they deny them in practice, and this cannot be gainsaid, for the description already given of them is recorded in the annals of authentic history, which are open to the world, and bear ample testimony to the facts here asserted.

But notwithstanding the blessed effects of the reformation in different parts of the world, yet great and numerous are the existing evils caused by the Romish Church, which has introduced into the world an almost endless train of errors, that have overspread the earth, and extended their baneful influence amongst a great part of the human family. These errors seem to be interwoven

with the texture of their being, and it is almost as possible to remove mountains by a wish, as to remove these errors out of prejudiced and superstitious minds, without the interposition of God. For so long as the scriptures are kept from the laity, who are denied the right of private judgment in their perusal, the great barrier to truth will be unshaken, and all other efforts to promote amendment will be comparatively ineffectual. The pious missionary may exclaim with the prophet,—“Who hath believed our report?” The judicious statesman may reach the last extent of human thought, to know what can be done to conciliate murmuring subjects and dispose them cheerfully to submit to the laws of their sovereign; but in vain do they labour to effect their laudable design, in a *genuine* and *permanent* manner, until the cruel mandate against the circulation of the scriptures be first removed, and the layman be allowed to read for himself the will of heaven concerning him in that blessed book, which has God for its author, truth for its matter, and salvation for its end. This would be a greater blessing to the nations, than all the free privileges which might otherwise be conferred, and would be more conducive to the safety and interest of both church and state, than all the combined fury of fulminant hostilities. For if the tree be first made good, its fruit will be good.

But some may be ready to accuse the writer of these lines with more presumption than knowledge in these remarks; but whoever they may be, he begs leave to differ from them in this matter, as

the course of a long experience has given him an advantage above many, of touching on the root of the matter, and sounding the mystery to the very bottom; having possessed motives and feelings in unison with those of many, which nothing but prejudice could sanction, and scripture remove. And although it is very unpleasant to flesh and blood to record such matters, yet when the glory of God and the good of mankind demand it, every degree of reproach in doing so must be cheerfully submitted to.

Nothing political has been intended to be the subject of discussion in these pages. The above remarks will therefore be excused, and considered as meaning no ill to any, but merely to shew the necessity and utility of the general knowledge of the holy scriptures, the want of which we cannot but deeply deplore; for who can tell the sorrow and calamity, devastation and death, caused by unwarranted admonitions by the Romish clergy to their people, who withhold the genuine instruction, and administer death to precious, immortal souls. Many of these poor deluded creatures are more to be pitied than blamed for whatever they may do improperly; for, in the mystery of iniquity, they are kept in the dark; and in justice it may be said of some of them, that from a secret impulse to do good; their conduct in many cases excels their doctrine, and their zeal in the attendance of religious worship and ordinances would put many to the blush, and shews how capable of divine instruction they are, which yet, alas! is withheld from them. How shall she who calls herself the

mother and mistress of all churches, appear guiltless before God in judgment, with her hands dyed with the blood of her children? "For the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her false doctrine;" (Rev. xvii, 2.); and although she may sit as a queen, and promise herself no sorrow, yet heaven declares that, in one day shall her judgment come, for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her: "For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities." Rev. xviii, 5, 7, 8.

But what shall be done to diffuse the sanative balsam of gospel tidings through the dark places of the earth, to stay the malignant plague of popish error, and cure the deadly wounds it has made? And who can think me too earnest in this important matter, when some who are dear to me are in danger of being swept away by its baneful ravages! Nay, on such a theme 'tis impious to be calm. The law of God is made void by the Romish clergy, who reject it in order to keep their own tradition, and "Teach for doctrines the commandments of men." Matt. xv, 9. They have at different times assembled in councils, and forged a system contrary to reason, scripture, and the feelings of humanity, and issued it forth into the world under the appellation of Christian Doctrine, supported and signed by the false seal of pretended infallibility; and imposed it upon a great number of the human race, as the only safe way to heaven, and pronounced all the rest who don't receive it as heretics. And so much is the system the friend of darkness in its liberality, that

any thing may escape its censure easier than vital religion or experimental godliness. For when swearing, sabbath-breaking, drinking, dancing, and singing songs, are indulged in, those who practise them are considered jovial fellows, having good hearts, and not doing much harm, as they are within the pale of the true church, where indulgences and absolution can be so easily obtained. But let any of them be led to see his ruined condition, by the influence of God's word and Spirit saying unto him,—"If ye live after the flesh ye shall die; and except ye repent and be converted ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." If he be thus led to seek and find pardon; and the love of God shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost given unto him, the greatest alarm will be then excited that he is about to apostatize from the true faith, and must be either persecuted as a heretic, or embrace his former errors.

Is this christianity? or is it according to the dictates of their own catechism, which asks—Who is a christian? and then answers by saying, "He who having been baptized, makes profession of believing in Jesus Christ, and of living according to his example and doctrine." But it is not according to the example of Christ to persecute any person for holding any doctrine, much less for holding that of Christ himself. Therefore they are condemned not only by the declaration of our Lord, but by their own also. So all those who persecute others for choosing a creed differing from theirs, as a safer way to heaven, prove themselves to be enemies to Christ, to his example and doc-

trine; and the source of such a spirit is ignorance and superstition.

Such has been the spirit and conduct of the members of the church of Rome, almost ever since they began to gain ground in the world, which is only of a modern date, although they assert the contrary by saying, "We were the first, and we shall be the last, our religion is the oldest." Well may they boast of its antiquity, for it is as old as Cain for fraternal discord and opposition to true religion; and for idolatry, 'tis as old as Laban's gods; (Gen. xxxi, 19—30;) and Aaron's golden calf; (Exod. xxxii, 4—8;) yea, it is so old, that it has grown blind many years ago, and the head Physician has pronounced it incurable without the scriptures, saying,—“If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.” Luke xvi, 31. And the words of the prophet may be applied to the pastors of this church. “The leaders of this people cause them to err, and instead of being the head, it is said that the prophet that teacheth lies he is the tail.” Isa. ix, 15, 16.

These are proper applications and true comparisons, of which I am a living witness, for I have discovered the errors and felt the persecutions of the church of Rome.

And now I come to shew her idolatry in Image Worship.

WHEN personages of noble dignity and high authority utter their voice, declaring what tends to the general good of society and special interests of mankind, they lay claim to the gratitude of their hearers, and deserve to be listened to with docility and attention. But let the whole earth be silent to the voice of God from Mount Sinai, saying,—“Thou shalt not make unto thyself any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them nor serve them; for I am the Lord thy God.” Ex. xx, 4, 5. The Pope of Rome seems to set God at defiance in this commandment, by contradicting and violating it in every point, and setting himself up in the office of God, to issue divine laws, pardon sin, and dispose of divine blessings; and this is done with all deceivableness, and with signs and lying wonders by him who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple or *office of God*, shewing himself that he is God. 2 Thes. ii, 4—9. For making images and drawing likenesses of our Saviour, the Virgin Mary, and the saints, and exhibiting them in chapels and places of worship, and bowing down to them, is an incessant practice in the popish church.

an image made like to corruptible man." Rom. i, 22, 23.

Thus does it appear that the Roman Catholics are condemned for holding and maintaining erroneous doctrines and idolatrous practices. And then, alas! a bad cause produces bad consequences; for, "If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch." Matt. xv, 14. But after all that has been proved on this point, both by matter of fact and the testimony of heaven; yet some may be ready to equivocate in order to evade censure, by saying, "We do not violate the commandments of God in any degree by making images, as we don't worship, but only venerate them on account of what they represent." But this evasion is vain, because the commandment is first violated in the dedication of the images. "*Thou shalt not make unto thyself, &c.*" And secondly, in bowing down to them; for it is said, "*Thou shalt not bow down to them.*" It is not only superfluous worship, but gross idolatry and unprofitable nonsense, to attend the shadow of worship instead of the substance; for if all the time that is lost in praying to saints and angels, and bowing to images, were spent in praying fervently to the true God, the only object of divine adoration, a real and saving change of heart and life would soon be the happy result; and the false and uncharitable opinion, that all out of the pale of the Romish Church must be lost, would not so powerfully predominate. But this bigotted notion also is a prevalent evil, and a most powerful barrier against the progress of truth, which must be removed

before the genuine doctrine of the gospel can be received. "God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." Acts x, 34, 35.

But another evasion from the censure of idolatry, in image worship, is, that it is no greater an evil to make images to represent the saints, than it is to stamp an image on coin, to represent the sovereign to whose dominions it belongs; or the making of any other portrait or personal representation. The mere making of images as representations of saints may have nothing evil in it, more than drawing portraits or stamping a coin, but it would be a cause of great astonishment, if we were to see any person bowing down to the image of a sovereign on a coin, or to any other portrait, kneeling down and kissing it in honour of the individual whom it might represent. Surely, a person who could be capable of such conduct, would be considered as in a state of insanity, or under the most infatuated delusion. It may be said, that there can be no proper comparison here, as there is a great difference between an earthly king, and a saint in heaven. But what difference can there be in this case, as neither the one nor the other is a proper object of divine worship? And even if they were, it is idolatry to bow to images of any sort, because God has declared it shall not be done. Those, therefore, who disobey him in this, are transgressors of the law, even in what they think to be a pious act of divine worship.

See the evil of having departed from God in the

early ages of christianity, when these pagan customs were first partially introduced in the church. I hesitate not to say, that many are now so grossly superstitious, that they are far more careful to preserve relics and images of saints, than concerned for the salvation of their own souls, or the souls of their fellow-creatures, for whom Christ died; and there are more prayers offered by some to saints than to God, who is alone the proper object of worship and divine homage. "For he is a Spirit, and all those who worship him aright, must worship him in spirit and in truth." John iv, 24.

Of Infallibility.

INFALLIBILITY is another astonishing privilege claimed by the Church of Rome, which she tells us was first given by Christ to his apostles, and afterwards handed down to her by succession. But as this pretended succession has been already proved to be false, by incontrovertible argument, it shews at once, that the Church of Rome is entirely cut off from every claim of infallibility from that quarter, which breaks the rotten cable of her false anchor, and leaves her to be tossed amongst the floating islands of uncertainty and disappointment. For, that man is a fallible creature, nothing is more certain. Even in his primeval innocence, when all his powers, both mental and corporeal, were unreservedly engaged in the service of his Creator, and when he had more knowledge and wisdom than all the popes of Rome together, and was pure, upright, holy, and happy,—even then he was not infallible, else he could not have fallen; and if Adam was not infallible in his first estate, can any of his posterity be so in their fallen condition? Nay, the voice of heaven cries; that “All flesh is as grass;” (Isa. xli. 6.); that “Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child;” (Prov. xxii. 15.); and that “The heart of man is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked;” so mischievous and fickle, that the question is asked, “Who can know it?” Jer. xvii. 9.

If this be the character which heaven gives of man, where can we find human infallibility? For St. Peter himself, who is falsely said by the Church of Rome to have been the first pope or bishop of Rome, was not infallible; for when he came to Antioch, St. Paul withstood him to the face, "Because he was to be blamed." Gal. ii, 11. Here then we see that Peter departed from the guidance of the Spirit; which proves he was not infallible. But some may be ready to sneer at this argument, and say, that they "Do not believe infallibility to rest in the pope by himself, nor in any of the members of the councils by themselves; but when the council are assembled, and the pope at their head, then they are infallible." But this is a mere fallacy, and contributes nothing to the establishment of such doctrine; because if the pope and the council are not infallible when separate from each other, their meeting together can no more make them infallible than the meeting together of a hundred blind men can restore them all to sight! If they were all blind when separate from each other, a sound pair of eyes could not be found amongst them when assembled together; for they would remain blind still for all the good their convention could do them. And should a thousand illiterate men meet together for the purpose of becoming thoroughly acquainted with the principles of literature, they could receive no more instruction from each other in that case, than if they had never met; for a profound scholar could not be found amongst them. No more can the pope and the

councils be infallible by meeting together. Therefore their claims to infallibility are false and ridiculous. Although the promise of Jesus Christ to his church is infallible, which is,—“Lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world;” yet he has not made this promise exclusively to one sect, party, or denomination of people, more than to another; but wherever there is a people who love and obey him, with each of them he has promised to dwell; saying,—“He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me. And he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father: and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.” John xiv, 21.

Thus the people who love Christ, whoever they be, his promise is infallible towards them, so long as they continue faithful; but *they* are not infallible because of that promise, as Christ is no otherwise than conditionally engaged in the fulfilment of it. And although some denominations of people may depart from him, yet all do not; for he has had a few of his witnesses in all ages who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal; and if one nation or people reject him, he will turn to another. When the Jews refused him, he turned unto the Gentiles: and so faithful is he to his infallible promise in being with his church to the end of the world, and so independent is he on the world for its fulfilment, that though all men should go astray, he is able of the stones to raise up a church to obey him; therefore, it is Christ and his promise which are infallible, and not any people who may profess to be his; for if they

abuse his church, he can remove it, and plant it amongst another people.

No church was ever better founded, or more entitled to the promise of Jesus Christ, than the seven churches of Asia; and yet they were not infallible, for five of them were reprov'd, some of whom were severely threatened for their errors and apostacy. Our Lord said to the church of Ephesus,—“Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent and do thy first works, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.” And to the church of Pergamas he says, “Repent, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.” Rev. ii, 5—16. And so disagreeable did the church of Laodicea appear in his sight, that he said, “I will spue thee out of my mouth.” Rev. iii, 16. Where is infallibility here? Not in the churches, for they went astray; and our Lord threatened to remove the candlestick out of his place, and plant his gospel amongst some other people, should they not repent.

Now, if these churches which our Lord planted by his apostles were not infallible, how can the Church of Rome be so, which was neither founded nor guided by Jesus Christ, else she would never be deceived by the false pretence of being invested with the power of infallibility, which is the prerogative of God, and not of man.

On Purgatory.

AMONGST the variety of human inventions of which the system of popery is chiefly composed, that of purgatory is not the least notorious. At first sight, this strange garrison may appear, to some, difficult to storm, being fortified by the united efforts of many interested friends. In it are the priest's bank, and the layman's last refuge. But although it may appear almost impregnable, yet, in the name of our God, we will set up our banners, and level the artillery of the gospel at its tottering bulwarks.

And in a reconnoitre so important, it will be necessary, first, to examine its basis and superstructure, and the magnitude of its strength. Its advocates tell us, that it is built on the authority of God, and is a middle state, in which departed souls who, being not entirely purified from their sins here by penance and good works, are purified by some means appointed by God, but unknown to us, and then received into heaven, where nothing that is defiled can enter; for when souls depart this life, there are some so pure and perfect as to be translated immediately into heaven. Others die in their sins without repentance; these descend into hell. Others neither have lived so wickedly as to deserve hell, nor yet so perfectly pure as to be forthwith admitted to the state of bliss, but are to pass through a purging fire.*

* See Council of Trent, Session 6.

Now, the question again recurs,—Where is Christ here? Every lover of him may say with Mary, “They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him;” for penance and purgatory have become his rivals in the plan of human redemption; the inventions of men are superadded to his blood, which *alone* “Cleanseth from all sin!”

It appears also, that those infallible advocates of purgatory were on very friendly terms with the carnal mind when they established, as a point of doctrine, that some in their natural state were not so wicked as to deserve hell, notwithstanding all that God has said of the entire depravity of the mind of man unrenewed by divine grace. Nothing but the power of God, by the influence of the Holy Ghost, through the virtue of Christ’s atonement, can purify the depraved heart of man, and make it meet for heaven; hence it can never be made pure by baptism and penance. Baptism; we allow, is a sacred ordinance which Christ has commanded to be observed, yet he never intended us to lean on it as a Saviour, or to substitute it for “the renewing of the Holy Ghost,” which alone prepares us for heaven. It is only “An outward and visible *sign* of an inward and spiritual grace;” and penance can never make atonement or satisfaction to God for our sins. Therefore, those who depend on baptism and penance for salvation, reject Christ, and are under the dominion of “the carnal mind, which is enmity against God;” are deceived by their unrenewed heart, which is “deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked:”

and yet the judicious doctors of the Church of Rome tell us, that there are some of them not so wicked as to deserve hell! But these wise master builders differ very much from God, who, from his views of man's lost condition, saw nothing in all the regions of unlimited space in any degree adequate to effect man's redemption, and qualify him for heaven, but the meritorious sufferings, death, and resurrection of his own Son, to whom he for ever ascribed all the praise and glory for every blessing we receive, and not to pope or council, penance or good works. Let God be true, and every man a liar who opposes him.

The advocates of purgatory endeavour to prove that it is founded upon God's authority, but we cannot find a single passage in the inspired writings to sanction the idea of such a place, though much ingenuity has been tried to pervert the meaning of the sacred text to that purpose. The principal passages which they have pressed into their service, are the following:—"Agree with thine adversary quickly, whilst thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee, thou shalt by no means come out thence till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing." Matt. v, 25. From these words they infer that our Lord meant purgatory, where some souls were sent after death, to purge away what sin remained unforgiven by the expiation of penance and good works.* Now, on this supposition, if the souls in

* See Christian Doctrine explained, page 266.

purgatory must remain there until *they* by their sufferings have paid the last farthing of the debt of sin, why do the priests impose on the people by taking money for saying masses for them? The text says, they shall by *no means* come out thence till *they* have paid the uttermost farthing. Therefore, if it be used to prove purgatory, as it rejects all other *means* of coming out thence than the payment of the last farthing by personal suffering, this leaves nothing for the priest to do; and takes away the darling object of his pursuit,—money. Hence this text completely destroys that which it is designed to support.

But, to every attentive and unprejudiced reader, it will be evident, that our Lord in this text had no reference to any thing like purgatory, but to the ordinary course of lawsuits; agreeably with which he warns the man who is culpable to compromise with his plaintiff before he comes to trial, in order to avoid the punishment of the law, whose rigorous demands must be satisfied even to the last farthing. And if this passage be taken in a spiritual sense, those who die in debt to the justice of God, shall remain so to all eternity; as the last farthing, or even one farthing, can never be paid by sufferings in another world, when the offered mercy of Jesus Christ was rejected in this. If Christ be rejected in this life, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin in any other: "Therefore it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God," (Heb. x, 31,) with the expectation of being reconciled to him after death, through the merits of suffering, when the atonement of

Jesus Christ has been neglected as if unworthy of attention, or inadequate to the accomplishment of the important work. O what gross darkness must cover the minds of the people who can believe the fabulous doctrine of purgatory!

But this doctrine is further argued from a few other passages of scripture; as,—“Whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.” Matt. xii, 32. Hence the Romish clergy say, that sins may be pardoned in eternity which are not forgiven in this life; but the text means no such thing. Many eminent commentators* tell us, that amongst the Jews “The world to come” was a constant phrase for the time of the Messiah; to which use of the term our Lord referred, meaning, “Neither in this dispensation,” (the Jewish,) “nor in that which is to come,” (the Christian.) They also inform us that the negation of any thing being accomplished in the world to come, was sometimes a proverbial expression for a thing that would never be done. The sin against the Holy Ghost is of so horrible a nature, that the state of a person guilty of it renders him incapable of embracing the terms of salvation, not only in the Jewish, but also in the Christian dispensation. For although the blood of Jesus Christ is more than sufficient to save the greatest sinners, on their sincere repentance, yet those who are guilty of the sin against the Holy Ghost, have no disposition to repent, and hence

* Dr. A. Clarke, J. Benson, Doddridge, Macknight, &c., on this passage.

can never obtain forgiveness, as a brief consideration of their case will show.

Those who have committed this sin, once loved God as their chief good, but have wickedly departed from him, and by repeated acts of rebellion have so quenched the Spirit, that he has given them up to the hardness of their own hearts, so that they have now no relish for divine things, but hate God, his word, and his people, as much as they once loved them. And as a proof of their malignant and implacable hatred against God, they wilfully ascribe the miracles which Christ wrought by the Holy Ghost, to the power of the devil, as did the Pharisees, who said, "This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils!" Matt. xii, 24. In this abandoned state they cannot accede to the terms of salvation either in the Jewish or Christian economy; because, without the Spirit, who has finally departed from them, they cannot repent; and without repentance they can never be saved. Hence the impossibility of their receiving pardon proceeds not from any deficiency in God's mercy towards them, but from their own indifference to his offers of grace to the vilest sinners. But let it be observed, that no man has ever committed this sin who fears he has done so; for those who are guilty of it have no fear respecting the matter, but rather persevere in their wickedness, and glory in their shame. It is well said by Dr. A. Clarke,—“Many sincere people have been grievously troubled with apprehensions that they have committed the unpardona-

ble sin; but let it be observed, that no man who believes the divine mission of Jesus Christ, ever can commit this sin; therefore let no man's heart fail him because of it, from henceforth and for ever." Now let impartiality say whether the above does not contain our Lord's meaning in this text, and whether purgatory is not left without any support from this quarter.

The following passage is advanced as a further proof of purgatory: "If any man's works shall be burned, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire." 1 Cor. iii, 15. By the fire here spoken of, Roman Catholics understand the fire of purgatory, by which the characters referred to are to be saved; but this conclusion is as unfounded as the rest. For every unprejudiced reader must allow that it is only a figurative expression, to signify the narrowness of their escape from ruin. For this figurative use of the term *fire*, see Amos iv, 11, Zech. iii, 2, and Jude 21. This passage may not improperly be applied to christians in general; but, from the subject of the context, it appears more particularly to refer to ministers of the gospel,* who in the 12th verse are represented as spiritual builders:—"Now if any man build upon this foundation, gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble, every man's work shall be made manifest, for the day shall declare it." Now the foundation here mentioned is Jesus Christ, of whom the apostle speaks in the verse immediately preceding, saying; "Other foundation can no man lay than that is

* See Benson's notes on this text.

laid, which is Jesus Christ." A minister may build his hopes of salvation on this foundation, but if he neglect to teach the vital truths of christianity, by attending to non-essential points; or if the doctrine which he teaches cannot meet with divine approbation at the last day, as not being either orthodox or essential, or in anywise calculated to edify or convert his hearers; or if the converts which are made by his preaching be only converted to some particular opinion or mode of worship, and not to Christ and genuine christianity, and therefore cannot stand in the awful day of examination,—“he shall suffer loss:” he shall lose his labour and expectation, and the future reward he might have received, had he built with proper materials; like a man who spends his time and labour in erecting a fabric of wood, hay, and stubble, which is afterwards consumed. But he himself, (that preacher himself, supposing him to be a true disciple of Christ, built up in faith and holiness on the true foundation,) shall be saved, yet so as by fire; as narrowly as a man escapes through the fire when his house is all in flames about him. He will be saved at last, not by virtue or power of fire, but by narrowly escaping the fiery dangers through which he has passed, and would inevitably have overwhelmed him in eternal ruin, had not his hopes been built on Christ the sure foundation. Hence purgatory derives no support from this any more than from any other passage of divine revelation; and having no support from the authority of God, it must fall to the ground.

All the props stolen from the inspired writings having been taken away, it now stands only upon one as fabulous as itself. This is the account of Judas Maccabeus sending to Jerusalem to have prayers and sacrifices offered for the dead who were slain in the battle, concluding "That it is a wholesome and holy cogitation to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from their sins." 2 Mac. xii, 43. But the defence of purgatory by this apocryphal tale, is like a thief on his trial calling upon a notorious highway robber to give him a character! The books of the Apocrypha, from one of which this verse is taken, were written by men who were neither divinely inspired, nor evangelically informed, of which their opposition to truth and propagation of error are a manifest proof. For this reason, none of these books were ever received by the Jews, to whom the oracles of God were committed, and the christian church was for some ages a perfect stranger to most of them. Few of them were acknowledged as canonical till about the ninth or tenth century, when the ignorance of the people, and the wickedness of the clergy, willingly allowed any thing to pass for divine which was in any degree favourable to their erroneous sentiments and abominable practices; nor was the authority of these books ever established but by the council of Trent, and a few of the papal dupes at Florence.

Every attentive reader may see, that there are many things in these books which are wicked, false, and repugnant to the word of God. The second book of Esdras is a collection of dreams

and fables, so bad and ridiculous, that even the council of Trent were ashamed to acknowledge it divine. The book of Tobit, also, is a notorious fiction. How fabulous is the story of Sarah's seven husbands being successively killed on their marriage-night by an evil spirit, who was said to be driven away by the smoke and smell of the roasted heart and liver of a fish, and bound in the uttermost parts of Egypt! and of Tobit's blindness being cured by the stroke of the gall of a fish, and of such a meal of the rest being taken by himself and the angel! And many other tales, equally as ridiculous, are found in this book. The second book of Maccabees, part of which is the principal authority for purgatory, has many of the errors common to the other apocryphal books. It is a history of fifteen years, and an abridgment of the work of one Jason of Cyrene. The author concludes it, begging to be excused if he had said any thing unbecoming the story. How unlike the conduct of an inspired prophet or apostle! who, notwithstanding the meanness of his parentage, the paucity of his learning, or the opposition he may meet with from the world, stands up and boldly enforces his divine mission, with,—“Thus saith the Lord.” But, indeed, this apology or request appears to be the best part of the work; for the author had much reason to beg pardon on consideration of the number of errors which he had committed. He asserts that Antiochus Epiphanes was killed at the temple of Nanea in Persia, whereas he died of a desperate disease on the frontiers of Babylon; and that Nehemiah built the

second temple and altar, when, on the contrary, they were built sixty years previously to his coming from Persia. And he commends Razis for murdering himself to escape the fury of the Syrians.*

Such are some of the fictions of those fabulous books properly called Apocrypha, which signifies doubtful or unauthorized, although they are held in much esteem by the Romish Church, because they favour her kindred errors.

Having thus carefully examined the foundation of purgatory, sounded its deepest intrenchments with the plummet of truth, viewed its darkest recesses and strongest holds with the gospel tube, and excavated its bulwarks by the force of reason, it now stands exposed to open danger, incapable of defence and unworthy of capitulation, and shall soon be shattered to pieces by the artillery of heaven. Those who hold the doctrine of purgatory, must of necessity reject Jesus Christ as their Saviour, and his word as their guide. And our Lord says, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." John xii, 48. Who can say that he and his words are not rejected by the inventors and votaries of purgatory? As a holy and jealous God, he declares against every rival in the salvation of man, and calls the attention of the world to himself, as the only means of securing eternal happiness, saying, "Look unto me, and be

* For the whole of this account of the Apocrypha, see Wood's Dictionary of the Bible, vol. 1, page 85.

ye saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God, and there is none else. Isa. xlv, 22. I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. John xiv, 6. I am the door of the sheep: he that entereth not by the door into the sheep-fold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber." John x, 1—7. Here Christ asserts his authority as the only Saviour of mankind, and rejects all others, by shewing the impossibility of salvation through any other medium but himself.

On the memorable day that he expired on the cross, he made a full and ample atonement to the Father for the sin of the world; and by his resurrection; ascension, and mediatorial office, he has opened a way for the vilest sinners, on their sincere repentance, to find pardon and access to the Father of mercies, and every necessary blessing both spiritual and temporal. For every thing we ask consistently with the divine will, we have a promise of receiving, but not through any other medium than Jesus Christ, who says, "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." John xiv, 13. Where can we find place for any thing like purgatory here, when Christ himself is all-sufficient for us, if we seek and serve him with all our hearts.

In short, to expect purgatory to complete our salvation, to expect a purging fire to accomplish a work after death, which the atonement of Jesus Christ and power of the Holy Ghost are supposed to be inadequate to in this life, is an idea that is

absorptant in its nature, and repugnant to every ray of gospel revelation. In this case, Christ need not have come, when purgatory could have saved man without him. Hence, the Father's gift is despised, the Son's merits are rejected, and the Holy Ghost's power disregarded, when it is allowed by some, that a person dying in sin can be purified in purgatory, and made meet for heaven. If this is not rejecting Christ, sunshine is not light, nor night darkness.

But the judicious divines of the Romish Church are not content with sending their own people to this prison of purgatory, but also insist on Christ himself having been there. Their Christian Doctrine says, "While his body was in the tomb, his soul was in the hell of the holy patriarchs, called Limbus Patrum." But what a barefaced falsehood of the father of lies is this! In what place of the word of God do we read of the holy patriarchs having gone to hell or purgatory? If even such a place existed, the preceding epithet, *holy*, would prevent them from going thither. And Christ, the holy God-man, having no sins of his own to suffer for, or impurity to be cleansed from, had no need to go to purgatory after death for himself; and having made a sufficient atonement for man upon the cross, as a proof of which he exclaimed, "It is finished!" he had no need to go thither for us. Although it is said, that "He descended into hell," it was neither the region of the damned, nor the supposed hell of the patriarchs. That his soul ascended to heaven when he departed this life, is not only above all things the most reason-

able, but also the most certain, according to his own infallible words to the penitent thief,—“*To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.*” Luke xxiii, 43. His body descended to the tomb; as he said to the Scribes and Pharisees,—“As Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.” Matt. xii, 40. Hence he is said to have descended into hell. Linguists tell us, that the Hebrew SHEOL, and Greek HADES, translated hell, sometimes signify the grave, a place of darkness, or the state of the dead. The prophet Jonah amply verifies this assertion: “Jonah prayed unto the Lord his God out of the fish’s belly, and said, “I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the Lord, and he heard me; out of the belly of *hell* cried I, and thou heardest my voice.” Jonah ii, 2. Hence the word of God infallibly proves, that after the death of our Lord his soul ascended to Paradise, and his body descended to the grave.

Our opponents fancy that they discover a purgatory in the following passage: “By which also he went and preached to the spirits in prison, which sometimes were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing.” 1 Pet. iii, 19, 20. Christ, by his spirit in Noah, was the preacher; so Noah is called “A preacher of righteousness.” Christ preached by him to the Antediluvians in much long-suffering for a hundred and twenty years, waiting for their repentance and return from the prison of their sins in which they were

bound down to the lowest degree of human depravity. As they rejected God, he also rejected them, for he said to them, as he now does to all others, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man." Gen. vi, 3. He strove with them by external preaching and internal influence, but to no purpose. Such was the horrible prison in which they were bound when Christ went to preach to them by his Spirit, when the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing. Hence this text affords no proof that ever Christ went to purgatory, or that such a place ever existed.

Probation in time is given us preparatory to retribution in eternity, where, without any intermediate place or state, we shall be rewarded or punished according to the deeds done in the body. Notwithstanding the various lines of distinction which separate the human family into the different ranks and denominations in which they are now placed, yet God pays no regard to human discriminations in matters relating to eternity, but sums up the whole race of mankind in two general classes of people, viz., the righteous and the wicked, whom he distinguishes in his word, in various places, by the different rewards and punishments which they shall receive according to their works. He thus addresses himself to the prophet Isaiah; "Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him; for they shall eat the fruit of their doings: woe unto the wicked, it shall be ill with him; for the reward of his hands shall be given him." Isa. iii, 10, 11. Solomon says, "The

wicked is driven away in his wickedness; but the righteous hath hope in his death." Prov. xiv, 32. This passage proves that the righteous have nothing to fear, and also, that the wicked have *no hope* in their death, but a fearful looking for of fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversary. The Psalmist says,—“The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance, they shall flourish like the palm-tree; but upon the wicked shall God rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest; this shall be the portion of their cup, for the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly shall perish.” Psalms i, 6—xi, 6—xcii, 12—cxii, 6.

The advocates of purgatory fly to the apocrypha as their strongest hold, yet it militates against them, for in it we read that the “souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and there shall no torment touch them.” Wis. iii, 1. This entirely supersedes the doctrine of praying for the dead, which in another place it commends. If “no torment can touch the righteous,” they need no prayers to deliver them from it; and those who are not righteous, are wicked, and such, the psalmist declares, “Shall be turned into hell, with all the nations that forget God.” Psalm ix, 17. “Where the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever.” Rev. xiv, 11.

Thus we find, according to the words of divine truth, that there is no such place as purgatory to be found. Hence it is *vain* as well as wicked to pray for the dead; for it is said in scripture, that after death “None can by any means redeem his

brother, nor give to God a ransom for him." Psalm xlix, 7. The Romish clergy oppose God and his servant in this declaration; but for what they do, is there not a cause? The money which they receive for celebrating masses for the dead, makes no small part of their benefice; and this may appear a strong reason why they plead so hard for purgatory, as they may say to each other, with Demetrius the silversmith, who made shrines for Diana the Ephesian goddess,—“Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth.” Acts xix, 24; 25. Their own Christian Doctrine, if carefully examined, will be found to disagree with the doctrine of purgatory. It says, that those who live wickedly and die in mortal sin, shall be cast into hell, where they shall eternally burn along with the devils. And it says, that this sin is committed by breaking any of God’s commandments; and unless it be removed by the priest, in the administration of the rites of the church, before they die, they are said to be lost to eternity. Now appears the mystery of iniquity. If the priest has power to remove the greater sin, why not to remove the lesser also, which they call venial or a light sin, which does not deprive them of the grace of God? Ah! but this would destroy that unknown place, “which brings no small gain to the craftsmen,” (Acts xix, 24.,) and would make the priest’s pocket pay for his honesty.

But what authority have they for saying that *venial sin*, as they call it, does not deprive them of the grace of God? as if they were to be coincident in the human heart, when our Lord has

penitent, and knowing the will of God concerning such, not only by experience, but by authority and commission, they directed him to the fountain of salvation at once, saying,—“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” Acts xvi, 31. And all who thus believe are justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses.” Acts xiii, 39. And this faith, which worketh salvation, is not a mere historical or theoretical faith, but a living faith in the eternal promises of God, through the virtue of Christ’s atonement by the power and influence of the Holy Ghost, applying pardon and peace to the conscience. This was what the apostles recommended to the trembling jailor, and which is the only means by which we can be saved; and those who neglect it in this life must remain without it to all eternity, for we are commanded to work while it is called to-day, (in this life,) “for the night cometh, when no man can work.” John ix, 4. It is written that “the redemption of the soul is precious, and ceaseth for ever.” Psalm xlix, 8. Therefore it behoveth us to “Give diligence to make our calling and election sure.” 2 Pet. i, 10. For if we neglect the opportunity afforded us in time, we shall never have any in eternity. The wise man gives us this exhortation: “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.” Eccl. ix, 10.

Who can prove the doctrine of purgatory, against these infallible declarations of holy writ,

without committing the shocking blasphemy of giving God the lie! The scriptures, instead of giving sanction to it, speak most strongly against it; and St. John, who was personally acquainted with the great head of the church, in his epistle to the seven churches, has not one word about purgatory; but says, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his (own) blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever." Rev. i, 5. And when taken away in the Spirit; in his heavenly vision,—“I beheld,” said he, “and lo, a great multitude, whom no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands: and one of the elders answered, saying unto me, what are these which are arrayed in white robes, and whence come they? and I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest; and he said to me, these are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white” (not in purgatory, but) “in the blood of the Lamb.” Rev. vii, 14. In another place he says, “I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.” Rev. xiv, 13.

But this voice from heaven is disregarded by the Church of Rome, even in regard of those who die in the Lord, who are called the faithful, for they are prayed for after death, in these words;

"May the souls of the faithful departed through the mercy of God, rest in peace." But if they go to purgatory, they do not rest from their labour; for bad as this world is for tribulation, which our Lord said should be the portion of his followers in this life, yet purgatory is worse beyond all calculation, according to the account given of it by the Romish doctors, who say it is a purging fire, a state of suffering for souls in the other world, who die in the state of grace. This is hard labour, instead of resting from it; and those who die in a state of grace, God has promised them a state of glory and rest from their labour, saying, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Rev. ii, 10. But the Church of Rome says, Nay, they must first go to purgatory. Hard labour indeed! to be cast into that burning prison, and remain there they cannot tell us how long; and after all their personal sufferings, their friends must pay the jailor's fees before they can come out! This surely would be labour, and not rest.

But what does holy Mother mean by a state of grace, if it is not a state of salvation or meekness for heaven, and living and dying in the favour of God? And why should it be thought that a person dying in this state should be sent to purgatory? as if God did his work by halves, or was inadequate to its accomplishment without assistance from some other quarter. The word *grace* signifies favour and blessings communicated by the influence of the Holy Ghost; and as salvation is its end, they who are brought into a state of grace,

and die therein, have no need of purgation in the invisible state to prepare them for the glories of heaven. Grace and salvation sometimes have reference to things temporal. Thus we read in the scriptures, that Noah found grace or favour in the eyes of the Lord; (Gen. vi, 8.) the end of which was the salvation of himself and his family from the general deluge. Queen Esther obtained grace and favour in the sight of King Ahasuerus, (Est. ii, 17.) which caused the salvation of herself and her people. But spiritual blessings are generally intended thereby. Thus, when the apostle prayed, the place was shaken where he and the people were assembled together, "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and great grace fell upon them all." Acts iv, 31, 32. Where this grace takes place, it is able to complete the work of salvation without purgatory, for it is said, "By grace ye are saved, through faith." Eph. ii, 8. And "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Rom. viii, 1.

Where then is the use of that wicked nonsense of praying for the souls of the faithful departed, when God has promised to take them to heaven, where they need no prayers.

Now, all who die are either prepared or unprepared for death. If the former, they are happy; and if the latter, they are miserable, and shall be so to all eternity, as none but the righteous shall inherit glory. And as it is a matter of eternal consequence, let us carefully examine

what kind of righteousness makes the distinction between the good and bad. It is not the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees; for our Lord says, "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." Matt. v, 20. These emphatical words, *in no case*, are sufficient of themselves to destroy the very idea of purgatory. But the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, according to the account given by one of them in the temple, was two-fold: first, negative; "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this Publican: and second, positive; I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess." Luke xviii, 11, 12. Such was the morality of this man's life, and acts of righteousness; before many witnesses he thanked God that he had avoided evil, and done good; To this may be added the righteousness of another Pharisee, viz., Saul of Tarsus. In his address to King Agrippa, Saul said, "My manner of life know all the Jews, which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify; that after the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee," Acts xxvi, 4, 5. And again, "As touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless." Phil. iii, 6.

Now all those who hope to purchase heaven merely by their good works, may learn the folly of their expectation from the characters here described, who strictly observed all the external forms of religion, inasmuch that "as touching the

righteousness which is in the law, they were blameless. The humble Publican was preferred to the self-complaisant Pharisee, and the deepest convictions of human insufficiency seized the other, when he saw his desperate condition, and immediately became willing to be any thing that would lead him to the favour of God, crying, "Lord, what wouldst thou have me to do?" Acts ix, 8.

Such, however, is the boasted righteousness of the Roman Catholics, who reject Christ, by leaning to a legal salvation. For that which exceeds the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, which raises us from sin to the favour of God, gives us a title to heaven, and works in us a meetness for glory, viz., a knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins, (Luke i, 77,) is detested by them as enthusiasm, presumption, and heresy. There are many irrefragable evidences contained in the word of God, that salvation is by faith, and not by works; but were they to be found in no other part of the sacred writings but in the third chapter of St. Paul's epistle to the Romans, these are quite sufficient to prove that the deeds of the law cannot justify us, but faith in Jesus Christ alone; for, says St. Paul, "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore, by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is

manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past,* through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. Where is boasting, then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? Nay, but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." Rom. iii, 19—28.

Such is the argument of St. Paul against legal righteousness. And then, to silence every gainsayer who might object, saying, the law is here rejected, which is holy, just, and good,—he adds, "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid; yea, we establish the law." Rom. iii, 31. Thus it appears evident that the law of itself cannot save us, but is fulfilled and established by every one who comes for pardon to Jesus Christ according to the plan of salvation which God himself has appointed. And the first step to this, according to the exhortation of John the Baptist, in the wilderness of Judea, to the Phari-

* God gives no indulgences or pardons for sins before they are committed, as the pope did by John Tetzel in the fifteenth century.

sees and Sadducees, is, that men should "Bring forth fruits meet for repentance." Matt. iii, 8. There must be an entire cessation from sin: not that this can merit any favour of heaven, but is a condition of salvation, without which all profession of repentance is as ineffectual as pumping in a ship would be without stopping the leak. We cannot serve two masters; therefore, when we forsake sin and turn to God, we come under the conditions of that salvation which is proclaimed by the prophet, saying,—“Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.” Isa. lv, 7.

Thus the fulfilment of the law in this point is not meritorious, but conditional, essential, and effectual. Conditional, because God had said, “If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door.” Gen. iv, 7. It is essential, because our eternal interest is suspended on it; for our Lord says, “Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.” Matt. xviii, 3. And it is effectual, for Christ says, “Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.” John vi, 37.

Thus we find that salvation which is freely given through the medium of repentance towards God and faith in Jesus Christ, is certain on God's part, because he has promised it; and absolutely essential on ours, because we need it. For our Lord says, “Except a man be born again, he

cannot see the kingdom of God." John iii, 3. And St. Paul says, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." Rom. viii, 9.

Now, although this is the doctrine of Jesus Christ, it is deemed heretical by the Church of Rome, which says none can know whether their sins are pardoned or not, whether they are worthy of love or hatred, or are in the favour of God. Strange it is, that she should contradict not only herself in this matter, but also all that our Lord has said in the passages already cited, respecting the absolute necessity of conversion both in heart and life, which can never take place beyond the grave, nor ever be possessed without being sensibly felt, so long as man is a rational being, and the bible the book of God!

Who can be so foolish as to imagine that God should create man, and then leave him to wander in uncertainties, without a possible knowledge of himself or of his Creator, by the influence of his Spirit, and the light of his word! But as a blind man cannot distinguish colours, neither can those who are spiritually dark and dead in sin, and immersed in superstition, experience or teach the heaven-born mysteries of the gospel of Christ.

Whatever the popish doctors may believe and teach contrary to experimental godliness, we can with unshaken confidence rely on the indubitable veracity of God's word, which says, "He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself." 1 John v, 10. "Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry

Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ." Rom. viii, 15, 16, 17. And again, "God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father." Gal. iv, 6. Now, who can say, with any degree of truth, that this is not a heartfelt salvation? for who dares give the lie to the Spirit of God, who witnesseth for himself!

The reason why this doctrine is rejected by the world, is obvious: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." 1 Cor. ii, 14. But however this doctrine may be rejected, the salvation it holds forth is what we must experience and enjoy, or we can never enter heaven. No excuse from those who have it not will be admitted at the great day, for salvation is offered in the gospel, and God is faithful and just, not only to forgive us our sins, but also to *cleanse us from all unrighteousness*, if we apply unto him for this great benefit; and if the promises and power of God cannot be depended on, as sufficient to cleanse us from our sins here through the merits of Christ's atonement, there is no purgatory to purify us hereafter; and if Christ be rejected, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin,—consequently no heaven.

Oh! how much do people err, by not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God! for this experimental salvation, which is an earnest of

heaven, is no cunningly devised fable; it is not a mere enthusiastic notion, or an over-heated imagination, as some have termed it, but an assurance of the love and favour of God communicated by the influence of the Holy Ghost to the heart of the humble penitent. It is as sensibly felt as a calm is after a storm, or as heat and light are after cold and darkness. And this not only agrees with general experience, but is also according to the promises of God, who says, "He will give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him." And again, "He that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and unto him that knocketh it shall be opened." Matt. vii, 8.

And such is the necessity of this experimental religion, that however fair the garb of morality may appear without it, it is no more than a legal righteousness, which in the day of public examination will be found to be no wedding garment, but will leave its deluded votary speechless to be "Bound hand and foot, and cast into outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth." Matt. xxii, 12, 13. Witness the five foolish virgins, who had their lamps with all their appendages, but had no oil in their vessels. They seemed to be in every respect as well prepared for the coming of the bridegroom as the other virgins, but when they had to go forth they discovered their deficiencies, and had to seek for supplies when it was too late, for they had to procure oil when they should have entered in with the bridegroom. They began to knock when the door was shut, but it was then for ever too late.

How dreadful is the sinner's state,
 Who sleeps to 'wake no more !
 He knocks, alas ! he knocks too late,
 When death has shut the door.

Thus we see the necessity as well as the possibility of living in a state well-pleasing to God ; and those who do otherwise, must be either sealed up in ignorance and gross darkness, or they love their sins too well to part with them. When they can hold them no longer, then perhaps they will reluctantly let them go, and trust to their supposed good works, or vainly hope that death or purgatory will prepare them for heaven. But could they get there upon these terms, they could not join in the chorus of the redeemed,—“Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever.” Rev. i, 5, 6. For they would not suffer him to wash them for fear of being accounted heretics or enthusiasts. Rather they would have to say, Glory to your good works, death, and purgatory. But, ah ! this cannot be : Christ has said, “If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.” John xiii, 8. And, on the authority of God, we assert that no sinner can be saved who does not come to Christ as such ; as he “Came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” Luke v, 32. “He came to seek and to save that which was lost.” Luke xix, 10. “He saveth his people not in their sins,” but “from them.” Matt. i, 21.

And although some do not feel their need of a

Saviour, nor see themselves as sinners, yet so long as the sacred scriptures and the Holy Spirit are freely offered to the world, their want of this conviction can admit of no apology, however they may quench the Spirit, and the pope and his clergy forbid the reading of the scriptures. The Holy Ghost would convince the world of sin if they would submit to his strivings; and the bible being the council of God, would guide them until God should afterwards receive them to glory. Psalm lxxiii, 24. The truth of this is plainly manifested in the case of every man who does submit to the strivings of God's Spirit. He sees himself a sinner, and reads in his bible that "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." James ii, 10. Thus he sees that if he has committed only one sin in his whole life, he is condemned by the law as a transgressor, and is under the curse of the law, which says, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." Gal. iii, 10. "The law is our school-master to bring us to Christ." Gal. iii, 24. And thus the sinner is brought to repentance, and directed to Christ for salvation. He now perceives it will not do to rest merely in idle wishes, but he must run and escape for his life from the roaring thunders of Mount Sinai; he must flee to Calvary for shelter, and trust in Jesus as his hiding-place. He incessantly cries, with the Syrophenician woman, "Lord help me!" and continues to ask, seek, and knock, until God fulfils his blessed promise,—“Ye shall go

and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you; and ye shall seek me and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart." Jer. xxix, 12, 13.

What a delightful combination of blessings is discoverable here! All human merit is disclaimed, and faith and works, twin sisters of heavenly birth, are inseparably connected in the efforts of the seeking penitent when supplicating the mercy of his God in the pardon of his sins through the all-atoning merits of his bleeding Saviour; and angels rejoice when God moves with pity to meet his returning prodigal. And after all that God has done for man, and promised to do for him on his return from sin, can any be so wicked as to doubt his willingness to save on these conditions; or deny the possibility of man's performing such easy terms of salvation? And who can properly question the reality of that happy change which passes upon the believer by the kind embraces of God's pardoning love! Although this operation of the Holy Ghost is as incomprehensible by men as the limits of the passing wind, yet its effects are sensibly felt. John iii, 8. And although many should dispute this, yet the believer is as sensible of his happy change and deliverance from the bondage of guilt, to the liberty of God's dear children, (Rom. viii, 21.,) as the blind man was when our Lord cured him of his blindness. Although he could not comprehend the divine operation, yet he was as sensible of it as of his existence, and said to the Jews that asked him questions which he had not an opportunity to

answer,—"One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see." John ix, 25.

This, whatever the Church of Rome may say against it, is the doctrine of the gospel; for St. Paul tells us, that "There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit;" (Rom. viii, 1.) and that "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." Rom. v, 1. And St. John says, "Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit." 1 John iv, 13. This has been the doctrine of the Church of Christ in all ages of the world, for Enoch walked with God by faith and obedience; for which the apostle tells us that "Before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God." Heb. xi, 5. And all the Old Testament saints enjoyed the knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins through the redemption of the promised Messiah. And under the gospel dispensation this doctrine has been preached and enforced by the apostles of Christ, and all his faithful ministers, unto the present day, and shall be continued to the end of the world.

It is true, Satan endeavoured to drown the woman by floods of persecution, yet God preserved her alive in the wilderness; and notwithstanding all the infernal tempests which have been raised by his emissaries, they never could extinguish the candle of the gospel, for heaven and earth shall pass away, but Christ's words shall not pass away; "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the

end of the world." Matt. xxviii, 20. This promise has never failed even in the darkest ages of the christian church; for God has always reserved unto himself a few who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal.

Even in the fifteenth century, when the most glaring abominations were invented and circulated as the peculiar gifts of heaven, in order to accumulate money and deceive mankind, God brought about the glorious reformation by the instrumentality of an Augustinian Friar, who arose like a phoenix out of the ashes of others, and never could be devoured by the vultures of Rome. For, in connexion with others, he propagated the doctrines of the gospel, and was succeeded by a constellation of worthies, who shone with peculiar lustre in the gloomy valley of the shadow of death, when establishing that church which has Christ for her foundation, and his law for her rule: they sealed the truth with their blood. And although this church is deemed heretical for having thrown off the yoke of papal tyranny, idolatry, and superstition, her doctrines are according to the word of God; for when Christ says, "Be ye holy, for I am holy," we answer him, saying, "Cleanse thou the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy name." And when this perfect love is enjoyed, the apostle says, it casts out fear, and it enables us to obey Christ, who says, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." John xiv, 15. This implies that it is not only possible, but essential, to live without

sin; for we desire not to pray for impossibilities, or non-essentials, when at the reading of the Decalogue we pray at the conclusion of each commandment, "Lord have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law;" and at the final conclusion, "Write all these thy laws in our hearts, we beseech thee." This is agreeable to the word of God, which says, that the blessings of obedience to Christ are "Not written with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in the fleshly tables of the heart." 2 Cor. iii, 3. And the Psalmist describes the happiness of the just man, by saying, "The law of God is in his heart, and none of his steps shall slide." Psalm xxxvii, 31. And as the Lord says by the apostle, "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out;" Acts iii, 19; we declare that he pardoneth and absolveth all them that truly repent and unfeignedly believe his holy gospel. And as it is said, "The just shall live by faith; but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him;" Heb. x, 38.; we pray, "Take not thy Holy Spirit from us."

These are the truths of the gospel of Christ, and are taught by that church which is called heretical by Roman Catholics, who neither understand the import of at least part of their own doctrine, nor that which they condemn in others. It is evident that what they call their Christian Doctrine, contains similar truths to those already stated; for it teaches the necessity of living without sin, in the enjoyment of God's love, and

keeping his law, by asking, "Is it necessary to keep all God's commandments?" and then answers "Yes, for by breaking any of them, we deserved damnation." Now, if this is the penalty of violating any of God's commandments, why should it be said that we cannot live without sin? as if God called us to perform impossibilities, and then condemns us for our insufficiency; or as if his grace was inadequate to our support.

But although we may be censured as deluded enthusiasts by the advocates of purgatory, for professing the enjoyment and consolations of the Holy Spirit as the gift of God, obtained by sincere repentance and faith in Jesus Christ; yet this Christian Doctrine already referred to, seems to say something in favour of our creed, for it asks, "Where is the Holy Ghost?" and then answers, "Every-where, but in a particular manner in the souls of the just." And again, "What doth the Holy Ghost in the souls of the just?" Answer, "He sanctifies them with his graces, and assists them in their necessities." Now if he dwells in the souls of the just in a particular manner, it appears very strange that they should be so insensible and indifferent to their worthy guest, as not to know whether he resided with them or not. For as it appears impossible for animate matter to act upon matter without sensible contact, so is it impossible for spirit to act upon spirit without inherent sensibility. Therefore, to say that a person may have the Spirit of God, and not know it, is as unreasonable as to say that a person may be very happy without knowing it. O what difficulties

do they involve themselves in, who depart from the standard of the gospel! If the Holy Ghost sanctify the just, by his grace, he leaves nothing for the priest, holy-water, or purgatory to do; for as he is perfect master of his business, he will either complete the work or resign it altogether. The Lord says, "My grace is sufficient for thee, but my Spirit shall not always strive with man."

O ye Roman Catholics! can you not see your own doctrine proves that you are made merchandise of by your priests? For your Christian Doctrine, as you call it, asks, "Who will go to heaven?" and then answers, "They who keep the commandments of God, and die in the state of grace." And yet your priests tell you that you must go to purgatory! If you keep the commandments of God, and die in the state of grace, what more can God do for you, or you for him, in this life? Yet still it seems you must go to purgatory. Christ has opened the way to heaven, and offers it freely to all, saying, "He that will come, may come;" yet the pope has endeavoured to erect toll-bars upon it, and woe unto them who pass without paying, for they are called thieves, robbers, and heretics, for refusing to acknowledge the inscription of his Miler, which is mystery; (Rev. xvii, 5.;) and the demand of his pocket, which is money.

Now, from these views of the system of popery,—views which cannot be refuted,—I appeal to the world, if any one can censure me for departing from so dangerous a system. However others may, get salvation in that church, who serve God

according to the best of their knowledge, yet I saw that there was no salvation for me in it. Nothing less than a divine conviction of the truths already stated, could ever have caused me to leave the Church of Rome, for I remained in it until conscience refused to be silent any longer, and then persecution soon put me to the rout. But with one of old I desire to pray, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge!" for being without light, "they know not what they do."

But we look forward with hope, that God will yet, in the wise order of his providence, by some means, remove prejudice and superstition from amongst this people, that they may receive the scriptures, which will teach them the truth as it is in Jesus. Then shall they serve God, and walk in the light, even as he is in the light, and have fellowship one with another, knowing that, "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son (and not penance or purgatory) cleanseth from all sin." 1 John i, 7. Then strife and animosity shall cease, and all nations and colours shall love God above all things, and their neighbours as themselves. The Judge of all the earth will do right, who, at the great day of final retribution, shall give unto every man according to his works:

An address to Roman Catholics.

HAVING made these few observations, I now address myself to you, my Roman Catholic friends. This little work is not intended to irritate, but to instruct you; and although you may imagine yourselves above seeking knowledge from such an insignificant source, as you may term it; yet remember that wherever truth is to be found, if it be fairly tried, it cannot be overturned. Let not prejudice to opinions and individuals, or fear of being led astray by this work, prevent your giving it a fair trial. Exercise your reason and judgment; and if your cause be right, you need not fear any danger by examination; and if it be wrong, the sooner you find it out the better. Your immortal souls are of infinite value; therefore a knowledge of the way by which they are to be saved, must be a matter of the greatest importance. God created you rational creatures, for which you must be accountable. Why then should you content yourselves to rest the safety of that upon the word of others, for which you must be accountable yourselves? You are not allowed to read the scriptures; consequently you can know but little of the word of God, the word of man being all you have for your religious instruction, which cannot stand the test when tried by controversy or otherwise; and then, when you see your cause fall to ruin, and are unable to support it, you generally make use of opprobrious and

insulting language to your opponents, and would rather conclude with a noisy clamour, and unchristian language, than have nothing at all to say; and although, by the force of truth, you may discover your error, yet your prejudice and superstition, blown up by the furious wind of fiery resentment, blast the good which may be received, and drive you back to your dark retreat. Why are you so much afraid of coming to the truth? How often to you, also, has "the word of salvation" been sent? And still you reject it before you have tried what it is, because you differ in opinion with those by whom it is offered. You are ready to conclude without any hesitation or research, asking—"Can any thing be good which comes from these people?"

Some of you are as much afraid of the bible, as you would be of an enemy of the most dangerous kind. How shameful as well as dangerous it is, in this age of the world, that you, who call yourselves christians, should not only be ignorant of the scriptures, but have an aversion to them! And this you imbibe almost from your infancy; which you cannot deny, for I speak from experience, as the following relation of a simple fact, which occurred in my own life, can prove. When I was a boy, at school, I one day looked into a Primer in which were a considerable number of wood cuts representing various objects, one of which was in the form of a book, and underneath it appeared these words,—“The Holy Bible.” I closed the book with aversion to what I had seen, and uttered words to myself too wicked to

be related, against the bible, of which I knew nothing more than that I thought it was false and dangerous, because it belonged to protestants, who I thought could not be saved unless they became Roman Catholics.

To whom is the cause of this gross ignorance of the best of knowledge amongst you to be attributed, but to your priests, who keep you in the dark, that they may make merchandise of you, and use you as they please? But this will not excuse you if you persevere in ignorance; for "light is come into the world," and if you neglect to seek it, or refuse to receive it when offered to you, no apology for ignorance can be available at the judgment-seat of Christ; for he may say to you,—“I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh.” Prov. i, 24, 25, 26. This is your “condemnation, that light is come into the world;” and still ye “love darkness rather than light.” Your danger is described, the way of safety pointed out to you, as strong as the mind can conceive, or language express; and yet you will not believe these things, though the voice of God from heaven gave testimony of them: for what more can be done to reveal the will of Heaven to man, than by giving to him the scriptures? Were an angel from heaven to descend to reveal the will of God to the human race, we have cause to think he would bring the bible in his hand, and enforce

his injunctions with—"Thus saith the Lord, as it is written in this book." So if you will not hear, believe, and obey what God says to you in his written word, you have no other way of knowing his will concerning you, and your duty towards him; your case is awful. May God open your eyes to see your lost condition!

You may now be ready to say, "we get a sufficient knowledge of the scriptures through the medium of our pastors." This is a vain apology. When or where do you receive such instruction? Surely not in a Latin mass,—not in an harangue about penance, warning against heretics, and the reading of the scriptures; not in private confession, where more than half the subject is your own. Where, then, do you get this instruction? for I cannot find out the time or place of it; and I know as much of the system as you. Your pastors will take good care that the wonderful opinion which you have of their extraordinary power, and the subjection which you are under to them, shall not be disturbed by scriptural instruction: for which reason you are ignorant of God and of yourselves, and look more to the power of the priests than to that of Jesus Christ; because they preach themselves, and not Christ. They tell you what great power was left to the apostles, and that the same power is handed down to them. This makes you believe firmly that they can do almost any thing; and although you cannot believe the gospel, because those whom you call heretics do so, yet you are ready to receive every report of miracles performed by priests; and al-

though you were not present at the performance of these supposed miracles, yet you believe in the reports of them as firmly as you believe in your existence. Many instances of this kind occurred in the neighbourhood of my first acquaintance, one of which I here beg leave to insert.

The parish priest of that place was held in high estimation, on account of the superior power ascribed to him by his dupes, for healing diseases, both of man and beast, inflicted by witches and fairies. The superstitious people supposed some of these imaginary diseases were easily cured by "the blessed priest," as they called him; and those who did not obtain a cure, were said not to have faith enough in the priest. His fame was soon diffused amongst the unenlightened populace, who flocked to his dwelling, from various quarters, for expected relief, when they became the subjects of affliction; and whether their cures were effected or not, some of the most wonderful stories were current about the miracles which were wrought by the priest. At one time it was said that he was invited by the military officers to dine with them in the mess-room, which invitation he accepted. This happened to be on a Friday, and they had no fish, which seemed to make the priest's dinner uncomfortable, as he could not eat any kind of animal food on that day. Some of the gentlemen apologized to the priest for the mistake; but he said, "never mind;" and spreading a handkerchief over his plate, he uttered a few words to himself, raised his handkerchief again, and there immediately appeared a beautiful plate

of fish, cooked and ready for eating! This lying account circulated throughout different parts, and I saw men who offered to give their oath that such a miracle was performed by the priest, although they never saw it, neither could it be ascertained that ever the priest dined with the officers, much less that he performed such a miracle.

These and such-like are part of the "Signs and lying wonders" which accompany the power of antichrist, "Whose coming is after the working of Satan;" (2 Thes. ii, 9;)"deceiving, and being deceived."

You may think that I am too harsh in my observations on these things; but I consider myself your friend in this matter. I see your danger: smooth work will be of no service to you; for those who are heavy sleepers, require a loud noise to awake them; and the case is more urgent when an awful precipice is discovered, into which they are in danger of falling. If you continue to reject Jesus Christ, he will reject you and deny you before his Father and his holy angels; and you cannot deny your rejection of him. You rely on your own good works, your acts of mortification and penance, to atone for your sins, and not on Christ; you pray to the Virgin Mary and the saints, and not to Christ, to plead for you in troubles and dangers; you look to the priest, and not to Christ, to deliver you; and you expect purgatory, and not Christ, to cleanse you from all sin.

What an awful rejection of the Son of God is

this, when human inventions and lying wonders are preferred to him! Your priests pretend to make him of bread and wine which they consecrate, and tell you they are his real body and blood, soul and divinity, although you cannot discover any visible change in the elements, for they remain bread and wine still. But you ask "Has not God power to work this miracle?" Yes; but God never employs his power to work inconsistencies, neither can a miracle be performed which is not evident to the senses; for it is a visible change which passes upon some object wrought by supernatural power. For instance: when our Lord changed the water into wine, at the marriage feast in Cana of Galilee, it was real wine, and not the shadow or figure of it; for the governor of the feast said, when he had drank,—“Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine, and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse; but thou hast kept the good wine until now.” John ii, 10. When he raised Lazarus from the dead, it was really Lazarus, and not his form or appearance merely; for he afterwards walked with Jesus, and the Jews sought to kill him, because many, who had seen the miracle, believed on Christ. When he stayed the raging tempest, his power was visible to those who were in the ship, for they exclaimed—“What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!”

Thus we find that all miracles must be evident to the senses; but the supposed miracle of transubstantiation is different to this, for it leaves you

bread and wine still. How can you suffer yourselves to be so far deceived by the mystery of iniquity, and renounce your reason and senses, to believe the doctrine of men, and renounce the doctrine of Christ, because it differs from your way of proceeding! Your foolish and wicked practice of praying to saints and angels, also dishonours Jesus Christ, who is treated by you as unworthy of your attention, or unsafe to be relied upon when you look to his servants to help you, and not to him.

But leaving the wickedness of this aside, observe the foolishness of it. Angels are neither omniscient nor omnipresent; consequently they cannot know your need, unless they are personally present with you, to see it and hear of it; for a finite being can only be in one place at one and the same time. The Virgin Mary is prayed to in the four quarters of the globe; and as she cannot be in all these places where she is called upon at the same time, some persons may cry in vain, as she neither hears them nor knows what they need. Other saints, whose existence in this world could never be found out, are prayed to. These are imaginary saints; so the prayers offered to them, and answers from them, must be imaginary also, and as fruitless as the cries of the priests of Baal. But supposing these saints to whom you pray to be attentive at your call, the things which you ask are not theirs to give; and they know more of the ways of God, than to obey your folly, in interceding for you, as they would not intrude on the office of Christ.

Such is the folly of praying to saints and angels. But saints are not only worshipped by praying to them, but, also, days are set apart, called holy days, for their particular service. These days are published on the sabbath preceding each of them; and although some of you should forget to be sober and peaceable, yet you will not forget, as you say, to "Keep the holiday." You go to Mass on some of these days, and as soon as it is over, some of you go to alehouses, and spend your time, money, and senses, in "Keeping the holiday;" others go to places of public wickedness; such as gambling, horse-races, cock-fights, and other criminal pursuits. What great evil is occasioned by the observance of these days! Idolatry is committed by dedicating the days of the Lord to the worship of his creatures; his commandment is disregarded, in which he leaves no apology for the appointment or observance of these days, saying, "Six days shalt thou labour." You may be ready to say, that "This commandment is limited; as there are many in the world who do not labour on any day; and if so, they cannot break the sabbath. But this commandment is not limited; for God never made any person to be idle: every one of maturity and reason, should occupy some office in which they may be useful.

You may again ask, "Is not the observance of Christmas-day and Good-Friday, amongst protestants, a violation of this commandment, as well as the keeping of holidays by Roman Catholics?" I answer, no; no more than the changing of the sabbath from the last to the first day of the week;

(Matt. xxviii, 1;) for it is done not in honour of any saint, but of Jesus Christ. Good-Friday is observed in commemoration of his birth, his sufferings, and death; and the change of the sabbath, of his resurrection. Another evil occasioned by the dedication of days to the service of saints, is idleness: work is neglected, money is spent, and poverty is the natural result thereof, besides the dishonour of God by idolatry, and sometimes the disturbance of the peace by immorality; and all this is occasioned by "Keeping the holiday."

Above all the superstitious practices by which you are enslaved, the prohibition of the use of flesh-meat on Fridays, Saturdays, and rogation-days, is the most strictly observed, and conscientiously attended to. You would violate the commandments of God with far less sense of guilt, than you would this commandment of your church. I have heard some glory in the shame of intoxication, and boast how much liquors they could drink at once; and yet these very persons would almost submit to suffer martyrdom rather than eat meat on a Friday. What a wicked inconsistency is here! The commandments of God are violated and disregarded, whilst the commandments of men, which are in direct opposition to his, are strictly attended to. This abstinence from meat is a visible mark of that apostacy and heresy of which St. Paul speaks, by the Spirit of prophecy, when writing to Timothy, saying,—
"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of

devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth." 1 Tim. iv, 1, 2, 3.

You cannot deny that this prophecy answers well to the conduct of your own clergy, who, contrary to the design of God, wickedly forbid the marriage of priests, friars, monks, and nuns, and command you "to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth; for every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving;" that is, every creature which God has made for man's nourishment, is good for that purpose, and to be thankfully received, whenever necessary for the support of human life; and nothing of that sort is at any time to be refused, rejected or despised, on account of days or seasons. Although God has commanded these things to be received, yet it appears that the pope thinks he can do as he pleases; for in some seasons of Lent he gives you liberty to eat meat on certain days, and on others none at all. This is something like "Sitting in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God." You believe him rather than Jesus Christ, who says, "Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man. But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart, and they defile the man; for out of the heart pro-

ceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: these are the things which defile a man." Matt. xv, xi, 18, 19, 20. But some of you would commit most of these evils with an easier mind than you would disobey the pope, or violate your superstitious principles, by eating meat on a Friday, although Christ has declared that such does not defile a man.

You may now be ready to use your old argument, and say, "If what goes into the mouth does not defile a man, then it can be no evil to get intoxicated, or take a draught of poison." This is silly reasoning! May not any person in the exercise of common sense know that God never designed food to be taken to excess, nor poison to be taken for food? for Christ spoke in direct reference to the victuals taken for the support of the body, when he uttered the words in question.

You may farther argue by saying—"It is not in eating meat that the evil is, but in breaking the commandment: it was not in the fruit that Adam found the evil, but in disobeying the law." You cannot plead your cause from this point, as Adam's case and yours are quite different in this matter. He had God's commandment, but you have the pope's, which is without true foundation or authority, and contrary to the will of God, who has declared that such food as he has appointed for the use of man, when taken in moderation, at any time, does not defile him; and those who eat without scruple in reference to kind or time, are said to "Believe and know the

truth;" (1 Tim. iv, 3.;) whilst those who forbid it, are declared to be such as "depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils." And he who warns his brother or fellow-creature of the evils of these things, is called "a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith, and of good doctrine, whereunto he has attained."

St. Paul exhorts you to "refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise yourselves rather unto godliness." Lay aside the legends of the Missal, and embrace the truths of the Bible: obey the commandments of God; and not the commandments of men which are contrary to truth and safety.

Do you not see the sandy foundation on which you are building, and the false props by which you support your edifice? I have endeavoured to shew you your error and danger, so far as simple experience and a knowledge of divine truth have enabled me. You see my simple reasoning, and strong proofs from scripture; you cannot deny or refute them; and if you disregard, or endeavour to disbelieve, what is here laid down to you, you are wilfully culpable, and must be accountable for the knowledge you might have received. You rest the salvation of your soul upon mere shadows, which can never support you. Your works can never atone for your sins,—the priest cannot forgive them,—supposed purgatory cannot cleanse them; and if you die in them, God declares that where he is you can never come; and still you run the race of superstition till you reach the end,

where you meet with the last application of your errors in extreme unction, which your catechism says is a "Sacrament administered to you at the time of your death, to strengthen you against the temptations of the devil, and help you to die well."

But let us see how widely the apostle differs with you in the meaning of the text on which you endeavour to found this doctrine. The text is this: "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him!" Jas. v, 14, 15. That a natural cure of bodily disease is here intended by the application of the oil here mentioned, is evident: the Jews made frequent use of it in the cure of diseases and wounds, and it is to this custom that St. James refers. In Judea, oil was celebrated for its sanative qualities, so that the inhabitants scarcely ever took a journey without carrying oil with them: for instance, see the case of the good Samaritan who poured oil into the wounds of him who fell among thieves. Luke x, 34. This oil was and is frequently used in the East as a means of cure in very dangerous diseases; and in Egypt it is often used in the cure of the plague.* This oil the apostle directed to be applied for the relief of the body, and the prayer of faith for the soul. How widely do your pastors differ with the

* See Dr. Adam Clarke's note on James v, 14, 15.

apostle on this point! He orders the sick person to be anointed in reference to his cure, but they anoint the sick in the agonies of death, when there is not the least hope of his recovery, and never administer that sacrament, as it is called, while there is any hope of life. St. James orders this anointing for the cure of the body, but they apply it for the cure of the soul; in reference to which use of it St. James gives no directions; and what is said of the forgiveness of sins, is to be referred to faith and prayer; which are often the means of restoring lost health; and preventing premature death, when natural means the most skilfully used have been useless. Hence it is evident that oil is of no service to the soul, but the prayer of faith; which proves that St. James' unction and your extreme unction are essentially different. We find that the disciples used this oil as a natural remedy in healing diseases, not exerting the miraculous power which they had in the gift of healing but in cases where natural means were ineffectual. We read that they "cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them." Mark vi, 13.

It appears that this gift of healing was given by our Lord to his disciples, not only for the benefit of the afflicted, but also as a confirmation of the authority of their mission, and the truth of the doctrine which they preached; and as oil was commonly used amongst the Jews, and was good for the natural cure of diseases, it was necessary that it should accompany the miraculous gift of healing. But the gospel being sufficiently con-

firmed, this gift of healing has ceased, and therewith the rite of anointing. Therefore your priests have no authority to keep up this ceremony, unless they have a miraculous power to restore the sick to health, which they have not.

Your catechism tells you that this anointing "strengthens you at the time of your death, against the temptations of the devil, and helps you to die well." But St. James says "The prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him." It appears evident, that the sins here mentioned are some particular ones, which might have occasioned the disease; for the apostle mentions no period of time when such a person was in the favour of God, and then "fell from his steadfastness" into open sin. Why then does he enquire "If he have committed sins," when "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God," if he does not refer to some certain sins which might be the occasion of the affliction, which are said to be forgiven, on this occasion, not by the elders, but by the mercy and power of God, in answer to "the prayer of faith?" Hence the sins which might have drawn down affliction upon the person in question being remitted, the disease was also removed thus: where the sickness was by way of chastisement, the healing was a public testimony of God's forgiveness. Thus the cause had to be removed before the effect could cease. We find that in the miraculous restoration to health under the powerful hand of Christ, the sin of the party is generally

said to be forgiven, and ~~this~~ also before the miracle was wrought on the body. It is evident that this pretended sacrament has no support at all from the writings of St. James or any other, but is a mere empty piece of priestcraft.

Extreme unction is considered by you and your pastors to be indispensably necessary to salvation; and yet it is never administered to criminals under sentence of death. If it is necessary for the benefit of the soul, why withhold it from them who are in as much need of it in that case as any other dying persons? This proves you deficient in your scheme of difference with the apostle's intention in the use of the oil he recommended. But although you have not a sound leg to stand upon in defence of extreme unction, still you continue to practise it. How awful to contemplate your conduct respecting this false ceremony! Some of you run on in your sins during the course of your life, and expect to be saved at last by this which some call "the benefit of the clergy." Accordingly, when you are going to die, and, as your people generally say, when "you can be no worse" and live, the word is,—*"send for the priest."* He comes, and gives you what you have been long trusting to: you and your friends then rest in hope of your salvation, however refractory your life may have been. And still it appears that the work is not finished; for after you die, one or more masses are celebrated for you, in order to deliver you out of purgatory; and your friends must pay the priest for thus deceiving you! O! how long will you continue to be thus led

astray; and suffer your immortal souls to be the merchandise of men! O! how I feel for you! I once was as blind as you are, until God by his word and Spirit opened my eyes, and changed my heart. The same way of safety and happiness lies open to you. Come and try it for yourselves; read the holy Scriptures, which can make you "Wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." 2 Tim. iii, 15.

It is well worth your consideration to examine whether you are right or wrong: your precious opportunities for this will soon be for ever at an end; and as you cannot tell how soon, the sooner you set to work, the better. You are fast hastening down the stream of time, and ere long you will be launched into the ocean of eternity, whence you can never return to make any provision for mistakes. It is better to find out your error and danger now, when you can escape from them, than when it may be for ever too late. Far be it from me to think that no Roman Catholics go to heaven. Should this charge be laid against me, I deny it. But one thing I will maintain, that your doctrine can never lead you there. The kind of characters who I believe may be saved out of your communion, I am not disposed to describe. Sin is the cause of every sorrow in this life; and to those who finally persevere in it, everlasting punishment in the next. It is equally pernicious wherever it is found, but a deliverance from it is free for all. To this you are invited, as an effectual remedy against sin and error, and as the source of eternal happiness. Christ

says to all, "Come unto me;" not to the Virgin Mary, or to any saint, but "to me, and I will give you rest." He declares himself to be both willing and sufficient to save you, if you come to him; and should any of you by this time be so far enlightened and happily made willing to be saved by the gospel, as to enquire how you may come to Christ,—you are exhorted to "lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset you, and run with patience the race that is set before you." Pray to God to give you true repentance, and grace to forsake and abhor sin: view what Christ has done to redeem you, and consider how willing he is to save you. Exercise faith in his promises: arise like the prodigal, and come, just as you are, to God for mercy and pardon through the merits of Christ's atonement; and he who has promised that whosoever cometh unto him he will in no-wise cast out, will receive you, pardon your sins, and make you happy in his love. All this, and more, he is waiting to do for you; and it needs not any long time to accomplish it, for he says "*Now* is the accepted time,—*now* is the day of salvation."

Accept of offered mercy, and God will receive you; he will "guide you by his counsel, and afterwards receive you to glory."

ERRATUM.—In page 67, for *Venite Adoremus*, read *Venite Adoremus*.

W. Walker, Printer, Otley.

